

THE CONFLICT OF JESUS

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THE CONFLICT OF JESUS

The Conflict of Jesus

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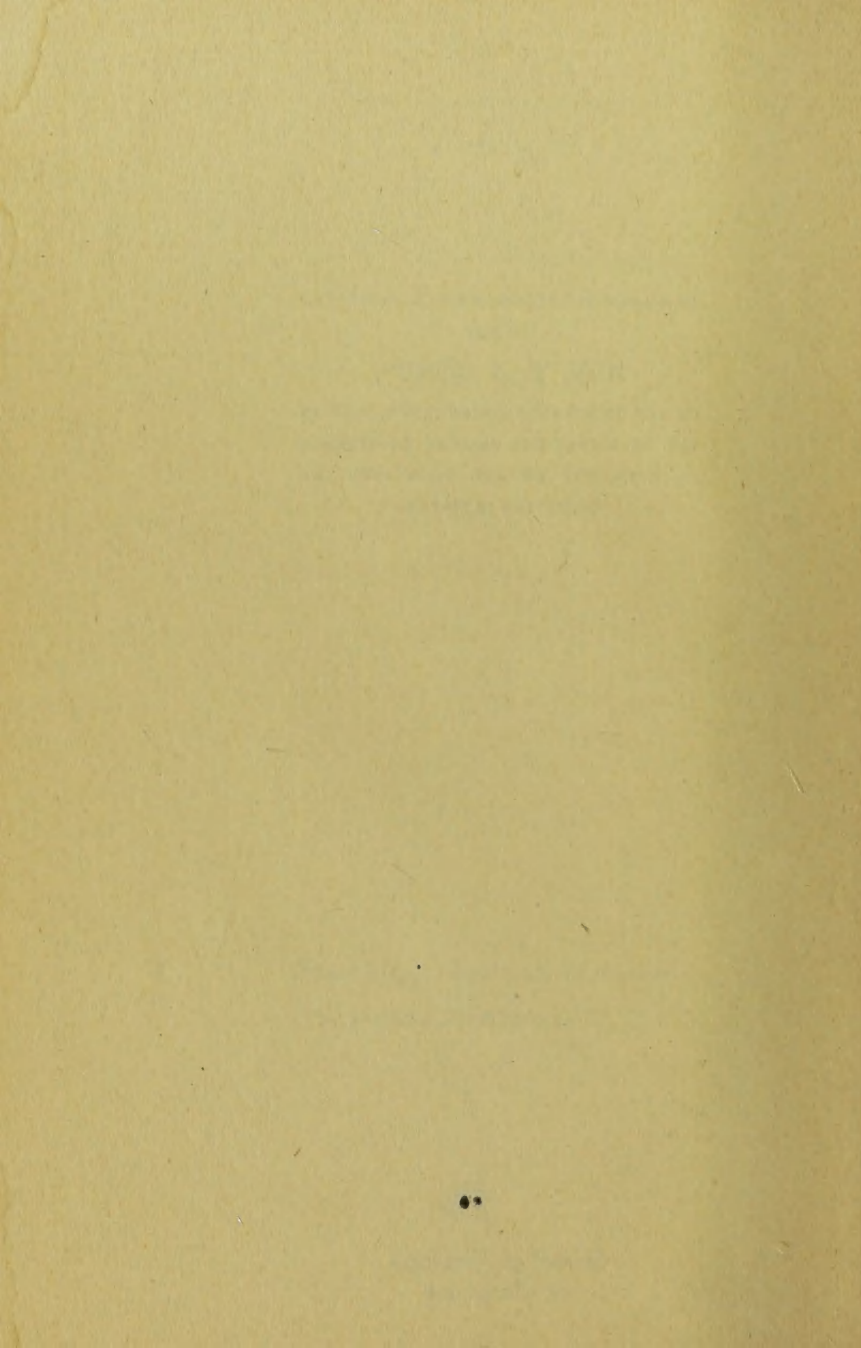
THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED
TO THE

REV. T. A. JONES,

OF THE MINNESOTA CONFERENCE, WHO IN
THE YEAR 1893 WAS USED BY PROVIDENCE
TO OPEN FOR ME THE DOOR INTO THE
CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.


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The Conflict of Jesus

CHAPTER I

THE HISTORY AND PRINCIPLES OF PHARISAISM

IN order to understand the conflict through which Jesus passed, it is necessary to understand something of the Jewish sects of His times. The Essenes were a small religious fraternity among the Jews, whose history is involved in obscurity. They were looked upon by the vulgar as saints and miracle-workers, and were the hermits among the Jews. They were the ascetics of Christ's time and doubtless were those who found fault with Jesus because He came eating and drinking, calling Him gluttonous and a wine-bibber. John the Baptist was their ideal.

The Herodians were a political party of the Jews who stood for the House of Herod. They are mentioned by Mark as taking counsel with the Pharisees "against him how they might destroy him." Doubtless it was they who asked the question, "Is it lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar or not?" They must have played a larger

part in the trial and crucifixion of Jesus than the other Gospels record. But the Pharisees and Sadducees played the most important part in the contumelious trial of Jesus. The Sadducees (Tsedakim) was a Jewish school or party that existed before the Syrian Wars, and their teachings are in contrast to those of the Pharisee. They were the Liberal Party of Christ's time, and did not believe in angels or the resurrection. Christ was in theological conflict with them and it seemed that in the end they joined with the Pharisees to condemn Him. Caiaphas belonged to the Sadduceean sect; he was high priest during the entire ministry of Jesus and until the year 36 A. D. There was a certain rudeness in his behavior to his colleagues (Godet). Josephus says: "The Pharisees are friendly to each other and cultivate harmony among themselves, with a view to the common benefit; but the manners of the Sadducees are much more rude both towards each other and towards their equals whom they treated strangely." In the end, as we shall see, "They took counsel together that they might put him to death."

John the Baptist rebuked the Pharisees and Sadducees by calling them "generation of vipers." Jesus warned his disciples against the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees, and we find the Sadducees among the persecutors of the disciples after the resurrection of the Christ, but it is the Pharisees who are the most bitter opponents

of Jesus, and it was they who "instigated the hostile meeting" that condemned him to death, although it was the chief priest who officially convoked it.

The Pharisees or Perushim were separatists. The word means "to set apart." The Pharisees first emerged as a separate part when the success of the Maccabean revolt led to the foundation of the secular state; at the head of which John Hyrcanus (high priest 135-105) reigned a secular prince, making alliances with other powers. The Pharisees were essentially a religious party and used political methods only when their principles had been severely outraged or when they could not otherwise attain their ends.

It is quite essential to a proper understanding of the conflict Jesus had with this sect that we understand their principles.

1. Separation from all intercourse in common life with the mass of the people, whom they designated as the "Am haarets" (people of the Land). It was extended to mean not only the heathen, but their orthodox fellow-countrymen who were less scrupulous than themselves in the interpretation and observance of the law. They would not buy or sell with an "Am haarets." Their great Rabbi Hillel said, "No 'Am haarets' is pious." They did not, however, separate in worship from the common people. They stood highest in the popular favor.

2. They held to the law as a necessity to right-

eousness. They insisted upon the Torah and the Traditions of the Elders. They made the Tradition of more weight than the law (Mark 7:8). One of their principles was that it is a greater crime to teach contrary to the precepts of the Scribes than contrary to the law itself. They were strictly a legal party: righteousness was the product of legal observance, according to their teaching.

3. They cherished the political ideal of a restoration of the kingdom of Israel, which they expected to be accomplished through the interposition of a divine act; preparation for this consummation they believed was best achieved through a strict carrying out of the law. Foreign domination they regarded as a punishment of God for the sins of the people.

4. Their other doctrines, regarding the immortality of the soul, providence, and human freedom, were less peculiar and held in common with the Jews. Their observation of all the minutiae of the law led to hypocrisy and falsity.

It was against this legal system, this system of righteousness by good works and strict observance of law that Christ preached his sermon on the mount, saying to his disciples: "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees you shall in no case enter the kingdom of heaven."

"Primitive religions looked almost wholly to-

ward the divinity; they concentrated all religious effort on worship." "To this class belongs Pharisaic Judaism. We must also class Antinomian Protestantism with its credit system of religion, and pseudo-demagogism with its pseudo-experiences, unethical conversions, and self-regarding morality." The system of righteousness as taught by the Pharisees and the righteousness that flows from a pure heart are unreconcilable. The conflict was inevitable. Spiritual pride, and that which is the sure result, hardness of heart and narrow bigotry, were the sins of the Pharisees. Legal righteousness makes clean the outside of the platter while the inside remains "full of dead men's bones." "With Jesus religion is identified with spiritual obedience." He looks not for the "ceremonially correct," but "the ethically pure."

It is often said, and especially by the modern Rabbis, that Jesus added nothing to Judaism. Montefiore, an English Jew, says, "Jesus initiated nothing." He says: "Take it all into account; take into account the fresh contributions to the conceptions of self-righteousness and suffering and inwardness, the new passionate enthusiasm for the moral and religious regeneration of the outcast and sinner, the modifications of the doctrine of retribution and merit in the relation of suffering to sin, the new attitude towards the Law, the revived prophetic proclamations about the relation of the ceremonial to the moral and

yet the new sinks into insignificance in comparison with the old."

It is in the "relation of the ceremonial to the moral" that the great conflict lies. "One who read the sermon on the mount, or, indeed, any portion of the recorded teaching of Jesus, can only marvel at the amazing contrast between the simple Gospel of the Kingdom and the enormous ecclesiastical and dogmatic structures which profess to be built upon it." The same conflict is ever being renewed in all ages of the church. Luther fought the same battle. Man, with his systems of thought and theology, is forever blocking the way to the Cross. Man does not like to throw himself in helpless dependence upon the suffering Christ. To-day "intellectual orthodoxy has been substituted for moral orthodoxy, and opinions hold henceforth a larger space than conduct in religious thought." Reformers are needed to-day, and perhaps martyrs, to save the church from its Pharisaism in philosophy and religion.

We are again dwelling too much on the traditions of the Elders "and paying too little attention to the simple teachings of Jesus. There is a bondage to the letter that hardens the heart, and a zeal for our theology that is likely to drive the love of God from the heart and crucify the Christ afresh. There will be a glorious renaissance of Christian theology when we bring doctrine to the test of life." The Pharisees' "piety

was strictly legal"; "the essence of religion consisted in the accurate knowledge and scrupulous observance of the law and tradition, which were the norm of life. No contradiction was allowed to anything that had once been introduced and laid down by the Fathers." To what a bondage such a principle will lead the mind. There can be no progress and no future revelation. Is it any wonder they thought Christ blasphemed when he made himself equal with God.

Christ disappointed their cherished Messianic expectations. They looked for a literal reign of God upon earth; when the power, of which they were deprived, would be in their hands, for the Messianic kingdom was to be the kingdom of the saints, and they were the saints.

They taught that the Messiah, who is not divine, is the son of David, and is raised up by God, whose vicegerent he is upon earth. He delivers Israel from the supremacy of the Gentiles, whom he destroys with the word of his mouth, and thrusts out the sinners (i.e., the Sadducees). How much that sounds like some modern sects. One is almost led to think that Pharisaism is not the sin of the Jews alone.

To justify the stern invectives of Jesus against the Pharisee we must go a little deeper into their system of merit. One of the evil consequences of this idolatry of the law was the externalizing of religion. God was conceived of mainly as Lawgiver and Judge. Religion was not

a fellowship with God, but a strictly legal walk before God. Christ said to them: "I know you that you have not the love of God in you." The doctrine of merit led to a multiplication of precepts as a safeguard to the keeping of the Law. They also sought to acquire merit by doing more than was commanded. How the words of Jesus, "when ye have done all ye are unprofitable servants," must have sounded in their ears. They laid stress not upon the rightness of an action, nor on the motive from which it was done, but upon its being commanded and upon its formal correctness. It was this mass of Talmudical rubbish that blocked the way to the kingdom of inward righteousness which is the kingdom of God. It destroyed faith. Jesus said to them: "How can ye believe that receive glory (teaching) one of another and receive not the glory (teaching) that cometh from God only?" Again He said: "Ye have made void the Word of God by your traditions." "The Rabbinical schools, in their meddling, carnal, superficial spirit or word-weaving and letter worship, had spun long accumulations of worthless subtlety all over the Mosaic law." They had come to the "sapient conclusion" that there were two hundred and forty-eight affirmative precepts, being as many as the members in the human body, and three hundred and sixty-five negative precepts, being as many as the arteries and veins, or days of the year: the total being six hundred and thirteen, which was

also the number of the letters of the Decalogue. They arrived at the same result from the fact that the Jews were commanded (Numbers 15:38) to wear fringes (tsitsith) on the corners of their garments (talith) bound with a thread of blue; and as each fringe had eight threads and five knots, and the letters of the word (tsitsith) made six hundred, the total number was six hundred and thirteen.

The Talmud pictures seven classes of Pharisees out of which six are characterized by the mixture of haughtiness and imposture. The "Shechemite" who obeys the law from self-interest. The Tumbling Pharisee who is always stumbling because he will not lift his feet from the ground; the Bleeding Pharisee who is always hurting himself against the walls, because he is so modest as to be unable to walk about with his eyes open lest he should see a woman; the Mortar Pharisee who covers his eyes with mortar, for the same reason; the tell-me-another-duty-and-I-will-do-it Pharisee and the Timid Pharisee, who is actuated by fear alone. And the seventh class, those who obey God because they love him from the heart.

In the presence of such men Jesus taught his simple Gospel, and for so doing incurred their hatred and lasting enmity.

CHAPTER II

JESUS IN CONFLICT WITH THE PHARISEES

THE bitterness of the hostility which Jesus faced day by day can be seen only in the tragedy of Calvary, and that tragedy is too deep for man's comprehension. In Jesus Christ centers the conflict of the ages and the center of that conflict is the Cross. The church has little understood the cross and far less the causes that led up to it. To understand the cross and the causes leading up to it, is to understand the world's Armageddon—the world's fiercest onslaught on righteousness and the depth of its hostility to God.

Sin was uncovered on Calvary and the State for taking part in the offence doomed itself to utter defeat. The enemy of righteousness broke himself on the Man of Galilee, and on the cross hypocrisy was laid bare and a true righteousness was revealed, a righteousness of faith. The forces that led to the crucifixion of Jesus were not worldly in the common acceptance of that term, but they were religious and spiritual—forces that lie deep in the religious nature of man. Jesus, humanly speaking, was the victim

of a false religious viewpoint. It was a perverted system that had blinded the eye and hardened the hearts of his enemies until they were beyond recovery. The Cross was a result of a contracted viewpoint and exclusiveness that had narrowed the soul's vision of the love and mercy of God. Roman heathenism could not have enacted the scene of the Cross. The act of crucifying Jesus was too wicked an act for the spirit of the Romans. Even the worldly Pilate, compromising servant of the state that he was, could not find it in his heart to more than consent to have Him scourged, but there was a deeper enmity in the hearts of the Pharisees—a religious bigotry that saw more virtue in Barabbas than in the Man of Good Works and Gracious Words. Heathenism was incapable of such a spirit and it is wasted logic for men to try and shift blame of the crucifixion of Christ on the Romans. The Jews as a nation and the Pharisees in particular were responsible for the deed. The vicious world did not possess such a cruel spirit. Harlots and drunkards did not have the spirit which ruled in the Sanhedrin the night the Jews cast their lot for the death of Jesus, and this spirit has ruled many ecclesiastical bodies since His day. Pharisaism is not the sin of the non-religious but of religious parties. Mobs may be nagged on to cruel and wicked acts, but they cannot plot and falsify against the innocent. The cruelest thing in the

world is a religion void of pity and empty of all love. Many who blindly execrate Christ's name because he has been so falsely represented would give him larger welcome. The "dogs" outside the camp, the people who were "accursed" not knowing the law, were ready to receive him, while His own received him not. This is the blinding sin of the ages—a religion of unbelief; a religion void of truth contending for the truth with hateful ferocity; a religion scrupulous about little things, but unmindful of breaking hearts and despairing souls; a religion exacting and intolerant in the form of religious expression and detail, but utterly void of "justice, mercy and truth." Contending for the truth in its blindness, it crucified the Truth; contending for God, it knew not God, when He walked Incarnate among them; calling themselves the children of light, they saw not the Light of the World. The perverted soul forces drove them on the rock which crushed them. Christ's death tore the cloak from the breast of this false system and forever revealed its false nature to the world. Pharisaism in putting Christ to death revealed its own nakedness and hideousness and forever doomed Judaism to the execration of mankind. "There remains then nothing but the Cross of Christ, the spirit of the life, and death of Him who conquered the world by being the victim of its sin." Christ called the Pharisees "hypocrites, whited sepulchres, the offspring of vipers and

serpents, an evil and adulterous generation and blind guides." Mozley says: "What was there in these men to call forth such language as we find in Christ's denunciation? They were a righteous class, paying much attention to many parts of religious practice free from sensual vice, very zealous and jealous for the Mosaic law, and the worship of the one true God. Such language was totally new to inspiration. Christ's first advent was not the judgment of men, but it laid the foundation of a future judgment." Again he writes: "Pharisaism was a new evil character in the world, not that the elements in it had not existed before, for it is part of human nature; but as a fully developed character and form of evil it was new. It was a new development of evil in the world when a class, socially and religiously respectable, was discovered to be corrupt at the root. Evil which was the parent of outward discipline and goodness was new, and it was fit that He 'who knew what was in man' should summarily and decisively arraign this new form of evil upon its appearance in the world; that he should at once stamp upon it that ineffaceable stigma which it has never been able to erase."

On every page of the gospels the conflict appears. Jesus does not seek the conflict, but He knew that it must come. He knew too well what was in man, and what was the spirit of the nation's rulers to think that He could escape their

bitter hostility and continue to uncover their sin and make His bold claims to divinity and claim for himself the prophecies relating to the Messiah. He knew he could not introduce into the world a religion so opposite to the one prevailing in Jerusalem without bringing down wrath upon his own head. He knew, too, that He could not follow the vision of His soul and satisfy the false system of the then ruling party. It is in Jerusalem the conflict centers. There is the blinding unbelief and the party fanaticism. "Jesus did not seek the conflict, since He abandoned Judea in order to avoid it." Natural unbelief forces Him from the city to the country, from Judea to Galilee, and again: "They frightened Him from Galilee where He would be more in the power of the Sanhedrin."

Jesus understands from the beginning that the Cross awaits him; He knows the bitterness of his enemies and meets their scorn with sharp rebukes and withering invective. At one time He turns on them with anger because of the hardness of their hearts. But if He avoids the conflict He certainly does not fear it. His eagerness to escape out of their hands is not to be understood as a weakness upon His part, but rather to give them a chance. There is sometimes pathos and pity in His appeal to them, and He would take out the stony heart by words of gentleness, but all such efforts are in vain. He tells them they must die in their sins, for their sin of blasphemy

is the one unpardonable sin. The sin that hardens the heart into hatred of goodness, and closes the eye to effulgent light, and stops the ear from hearing God's voice cannot be pardoned. And, let me repeat, this is the sin of Pharisaism.

There is no wonder they eagerly sought a cause to lay charge against Him, for they feared this rising Prophet and Wonder-worker who had stirred the country with His mighty deeds, with his words of sympathy for the common people and daring rebukes for those in high places. The occasion soon comes. He heals a man on the Sabbath day. It is enough. Pharisaism thinks more of a day than of a man impotent for many years. They whose first principle was to have nothing to do with the common people—what cared they for a poor sick man? It is, however, only a pretext. Hatred has been long slumbering in their unholy hearts, and the day of rest becomes the occasion for the opening of public hostility. It is now publicly known that the rulers at Jerusalem seek the death of Jesus. They took up stones to kill him. There is to be no rest in their endeavors against him until their consummation on the Cross.

In studying the soul conflicts of Jesus, we must not forget that much of His grief was caused by the shallow-souled crowd and by the weakness of disciples as well as by the deep animosity of his enemies. When the world would make him king, he departed again into a mountain,—

himself alone. Hostility is not nearly as dangerous to the soul as a false and fickle popularity. It will take more prayer and solitude to destroy the power of the world's friendship than to overcome our bitterest enemies, and this friendship is especially subtle when the soul has been meeting great opposition. The conflict must have been great in His soul at this time. He is crushed between the hostility of the Jews and their great unbelief and the fickle fancy of the multitudes which sought Him because they saw His miracles. There are two things a Christian must guard against: hostility to truth and a surface respect for truth. You cannot love truth except passionately. Following close upon this brief popularity came a great falling away among his disciples. "Many walked no more with Him." This would embolden and strengthen His enemies in their purpose to put him to death. It is at this point that Jesus "would walk no more in Jewry because the Jews sought to kill him." His own brethren taunt him and challenge him to go into Judea and work openly. He answers: "My time is not yet come; but your time is always ready." There is no shrinking and no fearing, neither does he court the conflict or seek to hurry on the tragedy which he sees swiftly gathering about His life. The shadows will deepen fast enough. The night will come with its agony and hiding of the Father's face. His enemies will not fail because their hatred is lasting and

fathomless. It is also capable of the darkest deed. It will not fail, for it finds its roots in deepest hell. It has in it the deep darkness of the eternal night. It had its birth not in human hearts, but in the heart of the Father of Lies. God pity the men who gave room in their heart for such hatred. He said: "The world hates me, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil." This was certainly spoken of the Jewish world, for nowhere else has He found such unbelief and such hatred. It was the Pharisaic world. It is in the ecclesiastical world that men are hated and put to death for speaking the truth that lies deepest in them. The persecutions of the non-religious world are insignificant when compared with the many martyrdoms resulting from the decrees of the church. It was never a great theological conflict. It could be truly said, "They hated me without a cause." We shall see later that there was a conflict over the interpretation of the law, but they hated the Christ for more personal reasons. Hostility to truth never shows itself more plainly than when it repudiates truth, because the instrument that bears it comes from the common people. They said: "Is not this Jesus the Son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?" Truth is regal in itself, and the true spirit can recognize it and welcome it when it comes wrapt in swaddling clothes, and nestling in the bosom of the "Maiden of low degree." Pharisaism has never

been reconciled to the lowly origin of the Founder of the Christian Faith. The proud intellect does not like the manger story.

There is much confusion at the feast because of Him, and He asks the Jews the question, "Why go ye about to kill me?" The people answered, "Thou hast a devil, who goes about to kill thee." Many said, "Of a truth, this is a prophet"; others said, "This is the Christ." "But some said (doubtless the Pharisees): Shall Christ come out of Galilee?" and "there was a division among the people because of him." The rulers sent officers to take him, but they answered, "Never man spake like this man." They that sent them said: "Are ye also deceived?" and put that weakest of all tests upon the prophets, "Have any of the rulers of the Pharisees believed on Him?" Whenever did an Ahab believe on an Elijah? Or a Borgia believe the truths falling from the fire-baptized lips of a Florentine monk? Did they believe on Wicliff, Tindale, Luther or Wesley? Is there a record anywhere that the Ecclesiastical rulers of the age ever believed the message of a prophet sent from God? Not a priest was found among the disciples of Jesus and not one in the upper room at Pentecost. It is hard for rulers to believe any new revelation of truth. How can there be any new truth and they not know it? "How knoweth He letters having never learned?" them of their teachers. The ruler can only "marvel" and ask how can

these things be? The common people alone can receive fresh revelations; "new wine cannot be put into old skins." They only who are not poisoned by theories or dogmatized into stiff-neckedness can receive fresh revelations of truth. The Pharisees said: "There can be no fresh revelation, for we have received the last word, and any new message must be false."

The anger of Christ's enemies reaches its climax at the resurrection of Lazarus. Through this miracle a new wave of popularity has swept over the people. Godet says: "The resurrection of Lazarus was not the cause of Jesu's death, but it occasioned and hastened the decree of his condemnation. The cup was full; this made it overflow. Fear urges them on. They say, 'If we let Him alone, all will believe on Him; and the Romans shall come and take away our place and nation.' " "From that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death." Jesus walks no more openly among the Jews, but he continues with the disciples in the city of Ephraim, near the wilderness, and prepares for the final struggle with his enemies. He pays a last visit to Bethany and the people follow Him enthusiastically into the city. The Pharisees are enraged. They said among themselves: "Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing. Behold the world is gone after Him." And, although He had done so many miracles, their blinded eyes could not see and their hardened hearts would

not believe and, what is worse, could not believe. "Many of the chief rulers believed, but, because of the Pharisees, they did not confess lest they be put out of the Synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. The Pharisees had intimidated the people with this threat; that if any man did confess that he was the Christ he should be put out of the Synagogue." They wanted to have the people feel that He was a dangerous person; dangerous to the nation's independence and to the law of Moses. In the Babylonian Gemara (edited from ancient traditions about 550 A. D.) the following passage is found: "Tradition reports that on the evening of the Passover Jesus was crucified (hanged) and that this took place after an officer had during forty days publicly proclaimed;—this man who by his deception had seduced the people ought to be crucified. Whosoever can allege anything in His defence let him come forward and speak. But no one found anything to say in His defence. He was hanged therefore on the evening of the Passover" (Godet).

The Pharisees thus put Jesus to death, but the death of Jesus was the death blow to their system and to Jewish theocracy forever. The death of Jesus opened a new and living way to God, and we are no longer under bondage to the law. Christ destroyed the legal system of the Jews. There are many in our times who are troubled about creeds and dogmas, about bap-

tisms and washings, about questions of casuistry which torment and harass the soul and fill it with despair. Let us enter the door Christ has opened for us; freedom from sin by faith in His all-atoning blood and freedom from tormenting scrupulosities by that life which is in Christ Jesus, "for the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

CHAPTER III

THE CASE OF THE PHARISEE AGAINST JESUS

IT is only right that we should treat the Pharisee fairly lest in our criticism we share his spirit. The Christian must not be one-sided in his investigation and it will strengthen his cause to treat his enemies fairly. They who are unwilling to do this have not penetrated far into the moral beauty of Jesus. I must confess the reading of the works of such writers as Montifiore and Herford, who write in defence of the Pharisees, and the work of Renan's "Life of Jesus" strengthen my faith in the cause of Christ. Their defence is so weak that it is necessary to resort to the charging of the Evangelists with prejudice and misrepresentation of the facts. Herford thinks the case in the Gospels against the Pharisees is overdrawn and that it is the result of the antipathy of the disciples after the crucifixion, but he certainly begs the question at this point. The Gospels bear the marks of frankness here as elsewhere, and surely the men who were guilty of the death of Jesus would not be incapable of the other charges laid at their door by the Evangelists. Some of these are

puerile enough, I grant you, and only go to show the moral darkness and stupidity of the Pharisees. It is significant at this late date that men should try to defend the Pharisees, and to do so by trying to lay the blame for their actions on Jesus and the Evangelists argues a weak case.

It is not our purpose to enter into detail concerning the charges brought against Jesus, but to enlarge upon the most atrocious and far-reaching one. We find that they accuse Him of being untrue to the Law in the matter of divorce; that He was a Sabbath breaker and encouraged others to offend against the sanctity of the day; that he sprang from the common people; that He also came from Galilee and not Judea; that He was not a man of letters and had not been taught in their schools; that He had not the regular authority to teach; that the Rulers did not believe on Him; that His works were works of magic, and that He was a deceiver of the people. But the greatest of all charges and the most inexcusable one was that He was in league with Beelzebub the prince of devils. This charge reveals the darkness of their mind and shows the deep-seated antipathy. They certainly had reached the limit of their reasons when they gave this as the reason for rejecting His miracles which He had wrought as an evidence of His Messiahship. All the other charges in comparison with this are minor and only go to show the meanness of the spirit which prompted them.

They are personalities growing out of a bitter controversy that was at a loss for more serious charges. "The action of Jesus in casting out devils was not in itself a ground of controversy with the Pharisees, since they did the same; and, moreover, neither side questioned the genuineness of the exorcisms of the other. But it appears from Mark 3:22-30 that the Pharisees alleged that Jesus performed his cures by the help of Beelzebub the prince of devils; and Jesus denounced them as guilty of the sin against the Holy Ghost, for their malicious slander in ascribing to diabolic agency what was due to the power of God. Then follows the famous declaration: 'Whosoever shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit hath never forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin'" (Herford). As the above writer says, this passage is the ground for the Christian theology on the unpardonable sin.

But such an accusation against Jesus only points out the moral darkness of His enemies. Well did He answer: "If I cast out devils by Beelzebub, by whom do your children cast them out?" And again He states positively as though to refute their wicked charge: "If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you." To make their sin all the more inexcusable they themselves expected the Messiah to cast out the devils when He came and this was to be one of signs how they were to know Him, and if the Pharisees admitted that

he cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then they were forced to recognize His Messiahship, which they had determined not to do. There is certainly nothing lacking in the claims of Jesus, and it is only moral perverseness that can refute His claims. Christ could well appeal to his works as a ground of their acceptance of His claims, but when they made Satan the power back of His miracles then there was no other power of appeal. This, then, constitutes their sin and unforgivable crime. This is the dead line of their moral imbecility and spiritual perverseness. Crossing this line, the soul dies eternally and irretrievably; crossing this line, the tragedy of the cross is not only possible but the only finality. To believe a lie like this is evidence that the light that was in them had turned to darkness. "There was a holy man before them, and because they could not deny the beauty of His deeds, they found out that they were done from diabolical motives, for Beelzebub's cause. Take care, do you recollect what sin they committed by that, seeing good, and refusing to recognize it as good? It is a perilous thing to set out with the assumption that a doctrine is true and that all who do not hold that doctrine are bad. Christ reverses the order of procedure—'believe me for the works' sake'" (Robertson). And that is where Pharisaism led into the blind alley of an eternal sin. For believing themselves right, and there could be no other true standard than theirs, and

since Jesus did not hold with them there could be no other alternative—He is in league with Satan. Christ in league with the devil? What strange conclusions. If this were possible, then how is man ever to know the truth? I know it is said that the devil will try to deceive the very elect, and this is Christ's own warning, but the nature of Christ's miracles made this deception impossible. Did the devil ever do such works of mercy? Miracles are ascribed to him, but they are not deeds of mercy. The corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit. The Apocryphal miracles do not come up to this standard. Many ask the question, How are we going to know the works of God from the workings of Satan? There is one infallible test: God works to a moral end. There is holiness in all His works and when God works He works with a moral end in view. There is nothing spectacular about God's workings. They have the stamp of sincerity and simplicity upon them. The Apocryphal miracles are miracles of judgment and they have no moral end. This is true of the ecclesiastical miracles of the Catholic Church. Even the Old Testament miracles in which the Jews firmly believed did not come up to the high standard of the miracles of Christ. They were, with the exception of a few instances, miracles of judgment and destruction. Why did they not call them works of Beelzebub? Satan open the eyes of the blind, cleanse lepers, heal multitudes

of sick folk, raise the dead, feed the hungry, restore the youthful daughter to life and love? When did Satan turn saint? Last summer a man told me that he attended a mission where it was said Satan was at work and after witnessing the work, he wisely said: "If the devil is doing that, he must have gotten religion." It was well said. Surely only the morally perverse could have looked upon the works of Christ and attributed the power back of them to the power of evil. Christ expected them to become the ground for their belief in His Messiahship; instead they saw only the working of Satan. The ignorant people with moral insight said: "If the Messiah come, will he do greater works than these?" But they were met with a sneer. Their own law should have warned them against such an attitude, for it says: "This will do (suggesting a method of reconciliation) where it is not a case of slander; but if he has put forth a bad name against his fellow-man, he hath not forgiveness ever." It would be well if we could exonerate the Pharisees from so terrible a charge, but it is the result of their system and in perfect harmony with their whole attitude toward Christ. It is the climax of their sin and their only logical escape and the only way they can justify their action. It is hard to understand such blindness, but it is altogether too common not to believe it. It is the mystery of iniquity and one of the dark things in human life. Their case is weak and it is a

common sin for men, when they are defeated, to slander their opponent, and when they cannot explain his greater works to say that they are the workings of a power of evil. To an age long steeped in materialism the working of God is called hypnotism, magic. It would condemn the Pharisees and their system to admit it was God, and it would call for humility, loss of prestige and self-surrender to acknowledge God working in Christ, and this they had determined not to do. It takes a humble heart to accept a new revelation and a contrite heart to bend to a new authority. And this spirit the Pharisee did not have.

The sin against the Holy Spirit. That is the terrible sin; the sin that hath not forgiveness, and the sin in its earliest stages hardest to forgive and the hardest to repent of; the darkness that knows no light; the moral night that has no breaking day; the despair that feels not hope; the atrophy that never heals; the state that never changes, but sinks in unending deterioration; the desolation that knows no resuscitation; the remorse that never loosens its grip on the soul, the sin that calls God a devil and cannot discern between light and darkness; the pure and the impure; Christ and Beelzebub the prince of devils. This subject is treated again in another chapter.

CHAPTER IV

TWO DOCTRINAL CHARGES AGAINST JESUS

WHATEVER Pharisaism touches it destroys. This was true of the Sabbath day. Made for man, it became a burden under the cold, bigoted touch of this wholly legal system. The question of the Sabbath will always be a vital one to the religious mind. It lies deep not only in the traditions of the churches, but in the constitutional need of man. Its relation to true worship makes it vital to man's salvation. The French Republic proved that it could not be abandoned without great loss to man and beast. It is therefore of great interest as well as of great value to know Christ's views on this important subject.

The Sabbath was the occasion of the first outward break in the conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees. Christ healed a man on the Sabbath day. It was at the pool of Bethesda and the Jews found him carrying his bed, and they said: "It is not lawful for thee to take up thy bed." For this cause the Jews persecuted Jesus. But Jesus answered: "My Father worketh even until now and I work." Here, then, is open conflict be-

tween two views of the Sabbath. It continued through His ministry and is one of the great causes of the Jews' hostility toward Jesus. The difference is fundamental. It is not seen so much in the external, but it lies in the deeper realm of the spirit. It was hard for the Jews to see and appreciate the different viewpoint, for theirs was a religion of fixed rules, while Christ's religion is founded upon principles. To them Jesus was undoubtedly a Sabbath breaker, for He had publicly and deliberately and, as it seemed to them, maliciously broken the Sabbath day. Their teaching on the question of healing on the Sabbath day was explicit. The logic was on the side of the Pharisees, but the truth was with Jesus. It is often so that the logic is with the Orthodox, while the inner truth, the life of principles, is with the Heterodox. I cannot take space to quote much from the Talmudical law, but a few quotations will make the attitude of the Pharisees clear. "A man might bathe in mineral waters—as at the pool of Bethesda—but not carry home the linen with which he had dried himself." There is no wonder they were indignant when they saw the man carrying his bed. "Bones might not be set, nor emetics given, nor any medical or surgical operation given." It prohibited the application or use on the Sabbath day of any remedies that would bring improvement or cure to the sick, but did not refuse such aid when there was actual danger of life. But nothing

short of actual danger of life superseded the Sabbath law. Hence the reasoning of the Pharisees: "Are there not six days in the week to be healed?" Then why heal on the Sabbath day? And Christ answers their logic by saying because it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath day. God made man for the Sabbath and your system makes the Sabbath for man. God made it a day upon which man should worship, you have made it a day to worship. God made it a day of rest, and you have made it a day of burdens. And to show up their inconsistency he reminded them that they themselves took the ox from the pit. But the Pharisees answered that, since the man was in no danger, it was unnecessary to heal on the Sabbath day. There is logic in their reasoning and some critics have defended the Pharisees on the ground of such reasoning. But Christ did not heal on the Sabbath day to antagonize the Jews, but in order that He might reveal the simple and true nature of the Sabbath and break the bondage of the Talmudical system. On another occasion they put the question, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?" and, reminding them that they would pull one sheep out of the pit and that a man was of more value than a sheep, he answered their question by deliberately healing the man with a withered hand. "This deliberate act is Christ's verdict on the Pharisees' view of the Sabbath. If it is wrong to heal a man on the Sabbath according to their Torah, or

law, then their law is wrong and the die is cast between them." The Pharisees took counsel "how they might kill him." Henceforth there is open conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees on the Sabbath question. They are sincerely or not in bondage to a casuistical system, while Jesus lives in the open freedom of a spiritual Sabbath. "Rabbinism enlarged the simple law as expressed in the Bible, and, in its anxiety to ensure its most exact observance, changed the spiritual import of its rest into a complicated code of external and burdensome ordinances. And shall we then wonder at Christ's opposition to the Sabbath ordinances of the Synagogue, or, on the other hand, of the enmity of its leaders? and can greater contrast be imagined than between the teaching of Christ on this subject and that of His most learned and most advanced contemporaries?" (Edersheim). Christ would not ask the question is it right to do this or wrong to do that on the Sabbath day, but rather in doing this would it do good to mankind, and that must ever be the Christian attitude toward the Sabbath. Christ was not lax toward the Sabbath day observance, but his action was free and he would not allow himself to be bound by the casuistical analysis of the Rabbinical schools.

We see, then, that there are two views of the Sabbath question, the Pharisaic and the Christian view. The Christian view is the Mosaic touched by the spirituality of the Christian faith. It is

significant that Christ does not mention the Sabbath in his Sermon on the Mount. It is not with Christ a question of the correct day or correct act, but the question of a correct spirit founded upon a divine principle. Robertson says: "Pharisaism regarded the day as mysterious and sacred; Christianity proclaimed the day nothing—the spirit, for which the day was set apart, everything." It is certain that when Paul wrote the words, "Let no man judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast day, or a new moon or a Sabbath day; which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ," that his spiritual mind had grasped the Christian view of the Sabbath, and that he is rebuking those who would put the yoke of bondage on the neck of the Christian. Neander states that in "a moral and spiritual point of view the religious observance of the day is most useful, but that it had not a particle of positive Scriptural obligation upon the Christian conscience." It was the view of Luther and the Continental reformers "that we might now just as well accept circumcision, the law of the priesthood, animal sacrifice, or the keeping of the Passovers as the keeping of the Sabbath command." That is when one is thinking of the Jewish Sabbath. This is called the German view, but this view was also held by Richard Baxter and such English theologians as Paley and Prideaux. The Scotch, English and American view is that the Jewish Sabbath, en-

joined in the Decalogue, with its many positive requirements and conditions, especially in regard to work, was reconfirmed by Christianity, there being, however, a transferring of days from the Seventh day of the week to the first. This is called the Puritan view. In many respects there is a striking similarity between this view and the Pharisaical. There are many sincere and earnest Christians who would find themselves in open conflict with Jesus over the question as to how one ought to keep Sunday.

The question of Sabbath breaking was raised in another form in Mark 2:23-28. It is in relation to this incident that Christ lays down his great principle that "the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath." Jesus was passing through the corn fields and his disciples plucked the corn to satisfy their hunger. But the Rabbinical law has rules for eating on the Sabbath and they are very strict. "All work connected with food would be classed as one of the Toledoth, of binding into sheaves." It says: "If a woman were to roll wheat to take away the husks, she would be guilty of sifting with a sieve." In this incident Christ appeals to the Scripture and to the divine principle that the Sabbath was made for man.

Divorce

Christ came into open conflict with the Pharisees over the question of divorce, or as one writer

has put it: "The question was strictly not about divorce in itself, but about the attitude of the Torah towards divorce." It is certain that Christ condemned divorce, even if He allowed one exception as in the expression, "except for fornication." It is evident that His attitude was one of opposition to the teaching of His adversaries on the subject. But in what respect did He differ from the Rabbins on divorce? Mark tells us that the Pharisees asked him, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? trying him?" And Christ said, "What did Moses command you?" And they said, "Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement and to put her away," but Jesus said unto them: "For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this commandment, but from the beginning of the creation male and female made he them"—what God "hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Here we have Bible against Bible. Genesis 1:24 against Deuteronomy 24:1, 3. Here we see the letter of the Pharisees and the spirit of Jesus. Christ even goes back of Moses to God. Here, then, is a part of the Torah that is not divine. This is sufficient to make the gulf between Jesus and the Pharisees impassable, and this is the real point of the conflict, for the Pharisees and Jesus differed very little in their attitude toward divorce. In this attempt to try Jesus they tried "to enlist popular feeling against Him" and even the disciples were agitated, for they privately

asked Him again on this matter.

What, then, is the general attitude of the Pharisees on the subject of divorce? It is best to ascertain this before we set forth the teaching of Jesus, for, as we have said above, they differed very little, but they differed enough to give grounds for controversy. But the real ground of offence was that Jesus dared to question the word of Moses and deny the binding force of his words and thus call into question the right to give a bill of divorcement. They renewed the subject later in Perea, the territory of Herod—that they might enlist against Him the implacable hatred of Herodias, but, as Edersheim has suggested, their main object was to involve Christ in controversy with some of the Rabbinical schools. In Matthew 19:3 it says: “Is it lawful to put away his wife for every cause?” Mark omits the phrase “for every cause” and that bring us to the study of what the Rabbinical schools taught on the subject. There were two main schools, one headed by Hillel, and the other by Shammai. All Jewish Rabbis held that divorce was lawful, but they differed as to its grounds. Hillel allowed divorce for frivolous reasons and was very lax in allowing divorce. Shammai seems to have allowed it only for the one grave offense. It was a question of the interpretation of the law. It was a question of the interpretation of the words of Moses, “if she find no favor in his eye, because he hath found some

unseemly thing in her." If any doubt were raised after the legality of the letter of divorce, the law always pronounced against it. The Jewish law regarded marriage with a woman divorced under any circumstances as unadvisable and absolutely forbade that of the adulterer with the adulteress. The Jewish schools in Christ's time recognized monogamy as the lawful marriage, but polygamy was not altogether unknown among the Jews, according to Josephus. Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount opposes the "political-theological standpoint," of the Pharisees, throughout the discourse, and there is a question as to whether the phrase "except for fornication" ever fell from the lips of the Master. It is only found in Matthew 5:32 and Matthew 19:9. It is not found in the divorce passage in Mark 10:11, nor in Luke 16:18. Tolstoi says on this phrase, "except for fornication," "What has saving for the cause of fornication to do here?" The intentional distortion of the text violates the moral and religious, grammatical and logical sense. It is singular that the word for fornication is used instead of the word for adultery. The Syriac translation uses the word Whoredom, which would be more appropriate. But be that as it may, and granting that Christ used the expression, then it is hard to see how there could be any great conflict with the Jews except with the school of Hillel. There certainly is no ground for divorce in Genesis 1:24,

and Jesus repudiates the bill of divorcement given by Moses, saying Moses gave it because of the hardness of your heart. Then the conflict came because Jesus called in question the conflict in Deuteronomy and showed that it was in conflict with God's institutional marriage. "The Mosaic Law," so writes Neander, "intended for a rude people, who was to be cultivated by degrees, allowed divorce; seeking to place some restraint, at least, upon unlimited wilfulness. Political legislation must adapt itself to the material on which it has to act. But the law of Christ sets forth the moral idea of marriage in its full strictness, and demands that its communion of life shall be indissoluble. Nothing but the actual adultery of one of the parties can dissolve the tie, and leave the innocent one at liberty to marry." But even granting that Jesus allowed divorce on the ground of fornication, it is unwarranted exegesis to claim that He allowed even the innocent one to remarry. Paul gives no such liberty in any of his writings on the subject. (See I Corinthians 7: 10, 7: 39; Romans 7: 1-3.) Paul was brought up in the school of Hillel and doubtless held prior to his conversion lax views on the subject of divorce, but his words in I Corinthians 7: 10 are significant at this point. He writes: "But unto the married I give charge, yet not I but the Lord, that the wife depart not from her husband (but should she depart, let her remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her

husband) and that the husband leave not his wife." Herford in his work on Pharisaism, who is taking the side of the Pharisee, says: "The Pharisees would be in agreement with Jesus, though probably not to the extent of admitting no exception, supposing that Jesus himself went so far." The position seemed to be that the Pharisees are condemning Jesus because He condemns divorce outright, while the Torah allowed divorce, and Jesus says, "Moses allowed it because of human imperfection." In the last analysis it is a conflict over the Torah. Jesus penetrates to the spirit of the marriage law; the Jews hold to a letter notwithstanding that it is, to say the least, in seeming conflict with the early word of Genesis, such is Pharisaism. It is the letter that killeth and Christ is the spirit that giveth life.

"Jesus rebelled against the oriental view of woman. Christ's treatment of women is original. A noble feature in his character was his desire to redeem and convert, and he did not leave outside of his redeeming activities the adulteress and the harlot. His championship of womanhood and her rights led him to ponder over that great sin of the Oriental life, the law of divorce. According to the Pentateuchal law, a man can put away his wife, but a woman cannot put away her husband. The indistinct language of Deuteronomy 24 led to the belief that the woman could be divorced for a variety of reasons over

and above infidelity." Some think Jesus took the ground of Shammai that divorce was limited to adultery. "It is, however, also possible that he went farther, and declared himself against all divorce whatever and on whatever ground." Thus "Jesus took prophetic ground and was right from a world-historic and universal standpoint."

CHAPTER V

CHRIST ANSWERS HIS ENEMIES

THE answers Jesus gives to the subtle questions of his enemies is one of the convincing proofs of his divinity. Truly Christ is seen to be "the wisdom and power of God." The spirit of Pharisaism is seen in the oft-repeated attempt to catch him in his words. It is recorded: "Then went the Pharisees and took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk." It is a striking tribute to the wisdom of Jesus that they were never able to lay a doctrinal charge against him, and at his trial were under necessity of hiring false witnesses. A student of Christ cannot help being amazed at the readiness of Christ's answers and the marvelous wisdom with which he met the caviling sophistries of those who tried to entangle him in his talk.

Let us look at some of the incidents. One of the earliest is the woman taken in adultery. The Pharisees brought the woman and said: "Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned; but what sayest thou?" This they said tempting him. Christ hesitated and

stooped and wrote on the ground. With curiosity we wonder what he wrote. Did even He want time to think? It is always wise to think before one speaks. The answer quickly comes. "He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone." It is true that this passage of Scripture relating to the incident is questioned as belonging to John's Gospel, and there are many and insuperable difficulties in the passage, but, as Edersheim says: "It contains much which we instinctively feel to be like the Master, both in what Christ is represented both as saying and doing." Strangulation and not stoning was the punishment for adultery, but it is with the wisdom of the answer with which we have to do. If he denies the right of punishment he conflicts with Moses, and if he endorses the punishment he conflicts with the Roman government that at that time had, it seems, taken from the Jews the right of capital punishment. But Christ shifts the question from Moses and the Roman Government to the realm of their own guilty consciences. Farrar says "that the lives of the leaders of Israel were often stained with such sins," or if that seems too strong a charge, as Edersheim thinks, to bring against the Rabbis of that time, it is true that Rabbis had been known to marry when in a strange village just for the day, seeking a divorce at night. To Jesus this would be the same as adultery, or we may recall the words of his sermon: "He that

looks upon a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart." However it was, they took the opportunity of leaving and left the woman with Jesus uncon-
demned.

It is, however, during the last week of His ministry that we find the Pharisees and Sadducees busy with their questioning. They tried to turn popular feeling against him by questioning his authority to teach. They asked him by what authority He did these things. Pharisaism made its ultimate appeal to authority, and to "decide differently from authority, was either the mark of ignorant assumption or the outcome of daring rebellion, in either case to be visited by 'the ban,' and this was at least one aspect of the controversy as between the chief authorities and Jesus." But Jesus answers them by putting the question: "The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?" And they reasoned with themselves, saying, if we shall say from heaven, He will say, why then believed ye him not? But if we say of men, all the people will stone us; for they be persuaded that John was a prophet. And they answered that they could not tell whence it was. And Jesus said unto them: "Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things." Christ has answered their cunning, for if they had said John was a prophet, then they must accept his authority and his mission, and if they refused the Baptist in whom all the people

believed then surely they would be disowned, the one thing they feared the most. Christ has established his authority by making them confess their ignorance to that which all the people thoroughly believed.

Failing in the affair spiritual, they next try to involve him in matters political and thus bring him into collision with the civil authorities. "Is it lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar or not?" "Remembering the ever-watchful jealousy of Rome, and the low artifices of Herod who was at that time in Jerusalem, with the reckless tyranny of Pilate, we instinctively feel how even the slightest compromise on the part of Jesus in regard to the authority of Cæsar would have been absolutely fatal." The Pharisees are anxious to put Him to death and they would prefer a political charge, thus shifting the responsibility to the Roman authorities to prevent a popular uprising among the people who hailed him as a prophet sent from God. It was the earnest disciples of the Pharisees, with the Herodians, who came to "entangle Him in his talk." If He should say it is lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar then the populace would be against Him, for they hated the Roman yoke and believed it was the work of the Messiah when he came to free them from that yoke. Or if He should say, it is not lawful, then they would accuse him before Herod and Pilate as being against Cæsar, which they afterward did do at his trial. With more than

human wisdom Jesus, perceiving their wickedness, says: "Bring me the tribute money." "Whose is this image and superscription?" They say unto Him Cæsar's. Then comes the swift and indignant reply: "Render therefore to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's." They are vanquished, for with consummate skill Jesus has escaped their plot and thrown the question back on them unanswered.

The Sadducees thought now to try their dialectic skill. They who believed not in the resurrection put to him what seemed to them an unanswerable question; seven brethren had one woman to wife, now in the resurrection whose wife shall she be? This was a disputed point among Christ's enemies. He could curry favor with the Pharisees on this point, but while the Sadducees' position on the resurrection was one of gross materialism, the arguments of the Pharisees had encumbered the doctrine with difficulties and had "deprived the simple fact of its grand majesty." Christ turns from the sneering casuistry of the Sadducees to the great fundamental facts of the resurrection. He first accuses them of being ignorant of the subject, not "knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God." He meets their materialistic conceptions by telling them that in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage. The resurrection is not as they ignorantly suppose, a mere awakening

from the present state, but a transformation by the power of God, the social relations of human life will not be carried forward into the new state, and if they knew the power of God they would not be carried away by such subtleties. "Nor ought questions here to rise, like dark clouds, such as the perpetuity of those relations which on earth are not only so precious to us, but so holy." "Assuredly they will endure, as all that of God is Good; only what is earthly will cease, or rather be transformed with the body." Such wisdom called forth from one of the party the exclamation, "Teacher, thou hast beautifully said." And yet once more the Pharisees, when they saw the "Sadducees put to silence," tried to "catch him in his words." A certain lawyer, perhaps the one who had said, "Teacher, thou hast beautifully said," put the question tempting Him, "Master, which is the greatest commandment in the law?" This was also a much disputed question among them. Here we have seen there were six hundred and thirteen rules or commandments among them, and whilst all were binding upon the Pharisees, it was a dispute among them as to which was the greatest. What will this young teacher say? The convincing answer is upon His lips. Listen, all who are troubled about rules of religion. This is the greatest commandment: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. And the

second is like unto it. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." The first was not new to the Pharisee, but the second was in open conflict with Pharisaism, which taught that it was unlawful to have anything to do with the common people. He got more than he came for and this direct answer called forth the question from a bystander, "Who then is my neighbor?" We must stop here. We have seen the wisdom of Jesus in answering his foes. Toward the close of the conflict Christ puts the question to the Pharisees, "What think ye of Christ?" They say unto him, "He is the Son of David." He saith unto them: "How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions." All their attempts had failed, but it had increased their hatred and deepened their desire to put him to death. They had suffered defeat in the presence of the people and the gulf between them was widened. They felt his superiority and hated him the more for it. It was to them unpardonable to have their faults and weaknesses brought out before the people. He had torn their mask from them and belittled them in the eyes of the multitudes. It is a dangerous thing to question authority and Jesus had

not only questioned it but he had defied it in the open. He had questioned the questioners and put them to silence, and he had forced them to confess their ignorance and left them in confusion. Jesus sees that all hope of winning the Pharisees is past. Their eyes are blinded and their hearts hardened. They are beyond faith and reason and therefore they are beyond redemption. You cannot redeem a man who has no will to believe, and no honest desire to know the truth, so in language at once startling and terrific Jesus pours out the righteous indignation—long pent up with a holy patience now exhausted—upon a set of men whose hearts had been hardened by a false theory and a false system of religion.

CHAPTER VI

JESUS AT THE PHARISEE'S TABLE

THERE is recorded in Luke, the seventh chapter, a striking incident of Jesus at meat with a Pharisee. This incident is recorded by Luke alone and for the reason that it sets in bold contrast the treatment of a sinful woman by the Pharisee and the treatment by Jesus. And here we see the two religions and their relation to the unfortunate class. Luke tells us that one of the Pharisees desired him that He would eat with him. "And He went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat. And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment." There is no place or time assigned to this narrative, but it is most likely it occurred early in Christ's ministry, for there is an absence of antagonism seen in the later meetings of Jesus and the Pharisees.

There is nothing said by Luke to tell us who this woman was. Some old commentators identify her with Mary Magdalene. It is not implied by the term "a sinner" that she was an

abandoned character, for Gentiles were called sinners. All we can safely imply is that she was ritually unclean and that her presence was an offense to the Pharisee. The woman has evidently met with Jesus before and doubtless has received help from him in the healing of her body and the forgiveness of her sins. She shows herself familiar with His presence. Simon seems also on very friendly terms with Jesus. Jesus calls Him by name and Christ's treatment of him indicates that he had a nascent belief in Christ's Messiahship. One commentator sees no reason forbidding us to classify him with Nicodemus or Joseph of Arimethea. There were doubtless many Pharisees of this type who were secret believers in Christ, but whose courage was not sufficient to attach themselves to Him openly. It is hard to break from these religious fraternities.

There is an ostracism that few men dare to face. There is a social separation that men cannot endure. The "fear of the Jews" held men back from becoming the disciples of Jesus. There are many secret Christians among the Jews to-day. The light of the Gospel has penetrated the dark minds of many heathen, but they dare not confess Him openly. One of the great blessings of the present war would be the breaking up of the power of the false prophet by the overthrow of the Turkish power, thus giving millions of Mahomedans a chance to hear and

believe the Gospel. These false religions bind the conscience and intimidate souls, but Christianity is a religion of freedom. Pharisaism was one of the worst forms of religious coercion, or as one has said, "Judaism was not a religion but a misfortune." Once in its grip it was hard to be delivered. While multitudes flocked to the baptism of John, Luke tells us that "the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of John against themselves, being not baptized of him." It is well to remember, for it throws light on this religion of bondage, that, whilst there were about six thousand Pharisees in Jerusalem, we have no record that one openly confessed Christ. And this was largely due to the fact that those who would do so would be cast out of the Synagogue. Many felt the burdens of the system, but they feared more the religious excommunication. The writer has heard men say: "If I became a Christian, I must give up my membership in the Lodge." It costs to-day to be a true follower of Christ, and multitudes like Simon fail to pay the price. And yet "whosoever the Son makes free is free indeed," and Christ had in mind the Pharisees and all those who feared them when He said: "Come unto me all ye who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest; Take my yoke upon you and learn of me for I am meek and lowly and ye shall find rest to your souls." Christ gives rest from the burdens of a religion that enthralls the soul in endless scru-

pulsoities—rest from the fear of man and liberty of conscience that frees the soul from a tormenting ritualism and despotic legalism. There are many earnest Christians who have not found this rest and who are still in the bondage of a Christian form of Pharisaism.

But let us return to the Pharisee's table and learn the lessons Christ imparts. The Pharisee had doubtless invited Jesus because he wished to know more about His prophetic claims. It is at this point he stumbles, for He cannot be a true prophet or else He would have known what kind of woman this was that touched Him. It was expected of the Messiah that He would be able to discern spirits. A true Prophet ought to do this. Then here is proof enough that Christ is not a true prophet. But Christ answers Simon by showing him that He discerns not only the woman's spirit but his also, and Christ proceeds to contrast the treatment He had received from the woman and the treatment He had received from Simon. "Beautiful indeed is the threefold contrast; Simon withheld the water; she gave tears. Simon kissed not His face; she kissed his feet. Simon furnished no customary oil; she poured forth the costly ointment." The Pharisee's religion lacked courtesy, affection and gratitude. The woman's heart is overflowing with all these; Simon loved little, she loved much. Her sins are forgiven not because she kept the strict letter of the law and was rigid

in her keeping of the ordinances, but because she loved much and, as Wesley says in loco, "Love is salvation." The Pharisee trusted in his keeping of the law for his justification, but here is a woman who has had many sins who finds free and abundant forgiveness because of her faith and love. Then, what is salvation? It is the enthronement of the principle of love in the human heart and not the cold observance of a religion of ordinances. Courtesy, affection, gratitude, these are the essentials of pure religion. And without these the rest counts for little. It is not her works which justify her, but the faith that prompts her works.

How little the church has understood the Gospel of Christ. How she, like the Pharisee of old, has laid heavy burdens on the souls of the people. May we sit at meat with the Master and learn of Him that faith saves and not our works, and that love is the redeeming power of God in the human soul. And they that sat at meat with Him began to say within themselves, "Who is this that forgiveth sins also?" It was hard for the Pharisee to grasp the free love of God and it seemed the height of presumption for Christ to say "Thy sins are forgiven thee" to a woman who had no ritualistic standing and no good credit to her name, but such is the free love of God to all who with penitent hearts turn from sin and cast themselves with loving gratitude at the feet of benevolent love. Christ vin-

dicates her act before the Pharisaic party and proclaims a religion both simple and sublime. He shows that the way back to God for the sinner is not by the laborious route of keeping endless rites and ceremonies, but by a simple faith springing from a heart made tender by true penitence and filled with an enthusiasm for goodness; a faith that throws itself with holy abandon at the feet of the Holy One and that finds its true fellowship in the presence of the All Pure; a faith that brings the soul to a full consecration and does not hesitate to bring its best to be lavished in holy abandon upon the object of its gratitude. This is salvation as Christ preached it. To yield our rebellious hearts to the spirit of loving obedience; to let our stony hearts be removed and to receive a heart of flesh; to become tender-hearted and all-loving, compassionate toward the erring and kind-hearted toward the needy; to forget self in that large generosity that thinks of others, and to do all this because we love the Spirit of God in return for His love for us. This is salvation. Salvation is not having a correct creed; it is not the boon of the truly orthodox; it is not the blessing flowing to the strictest of sects; it is the free gift of God to "a broken and contrite heart."

Simon is silent with wondering amazement. He does not revile, but neither can he understand Jesus, for all his training has been in an opposite direction. Salvation with him must be

purchased by washings and fastings, and strict obedience to man-made rules, and he has yet to learn with Paul that such a religion is a "body of death," and that the soul cannot find salvation along that barren way. And we need not be surprised because there are multitudes in the Christian church who have never understood the freedom of God's grace, but are troubled about days and meats and drinks and are still in the bondage of a Christianized legalism. The leaven of Pharisaism which was hid in the meal has leavened the whole church. Where are the free souls? How little the church of the centuries has entered into the freedom of Christ. It seems so easy to Judaize the spirit of man, and so easy to turn to another Gospel which is not a Gospel. This was Paul's great task to keep the church in the Freedom of Christ, but it has been forever returning to the bondage of the letter. Luther only partly delivered the church from salvation by works. Even he refused to shake hands with Zwingli because he could not accept the theory of consubstantiation. Wesley, one of the most spiritual men of the ages, left a church in bondage to its own forms and Methodist principles. Quakerism with its leader, George Fox, "the freest man in England," has its own bondage, and there is constantly arising within the pale of the church movements which show a closer kinship with the Pharisaism of the Jews than to the religion of Christ. And per-

haps the laconic words of Heine will yet prove their truth: "The mission of the Jews will not be ended until they have won the Christians over to the religion of Christ." We still hear the cry of "No pork" and "No oysters," the insistence of peculiar forms of dress, and forms of worship and beliefs of doctrine preached as essential to salvation. It seems, after all, that very few minds have understood Jesus and His religion. The Christian church is still in bondage to a modern Pharisaism in some sections and to a modern latitudinarianism in other quarters. Christendom is now in the crucible, and its faith is being severely tested. There are bright streaks on the horizon and some day we shall be free. The Deliverer will come and the church will break her alabaster box of ointment at the feet of the Master. "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain" for redemption. There are many earnest souls like Simon who are longing for the consolation of Israel; for the freedom of soul that breaks into rapturous adoration; for souls that leap to the obedience of Christ; with souls filled with spontaneous praise and souls free to do the perfect will of God. That freedom is coming. Who can doubt it? The world is a-weary for it and souls are crying out for it. The Spirit also is calling the church unto it. What has meant all this restlessness of the world and church if the world is not tired of its formalities? This unrest is the most encouraging

sign and when the great war is over men will not be able to return to the commonplace in religion. There will have come, we trust, a larger soul freedom in all departments of life, and the horrors of the present conflict can only be endured because we see this larger freedom coming to the world. The old skins are bursting with new wine. The shackles are falling from the souls of men and nations. The churches, too, will share in the new liberty. We wait at thy feet, Master, and we are willing to spill our precious materialism for the greater boon of soul liberty.

There is another occasion at which Christ sat at meat with a Pharisee. In the earlier stage of His ministry, before the enmity had deepened into open conflict, Jesus was frequently invited to dine at the homes of the Pharisees. Some invited Him out of courtesy; some because they were anxious to know more of His teaching, and others because they wished to prove or test His loyalty to the social rules of their religion, and others to catch Him in his words.

In Luke, eleventh chapter, we have the record of another of these occasions, where it says: "And as He spake, a certain Pharisee besought him to dine with him; and he went in, and sat down to meat. And when the Pharisee saw it he marvelled that he had not first washed before dinner." The words which follow show that a heated discussion followed which called forth

Christ's teaching concerning purification. Now there is nothing objectionable to the washing of hands before meat, but Christ wished to rebuke these externalisms because the Pharisee had placed too great an importance upon them, and in neglect of the greater purification of the heart. They had made "clean the outside of the platter, while their inward part was full of ravening and wickedness." The purer the heart becomes the less need man has for externalism in religion. The contention of Christ will be better understood if we understand a little of the custom of purification as practised by the Pharisees. "As the guests enter to partake of meat they take their seats and water is brought them, with which they wash one hand. After this the cup is taken, when each speaks the blessing over the wine partaken of before dinner. Presently they all lie down at table. Water is again brought to them, with which they now wash both hands, preparatory to the meal; when the blessing is spoken over the bread, and then over the cup, by the chief person at the feast or else by one selected by the way of distinction." Now think of the Pharisee's amazement when Christ refused to wash his hands. It was not lack of courtesy on the part of Jesus that he refused to do so, but knowing the stress the Pharisees put upon this rite he could not have done so without condoning not only a foolish custom, but a wicked externalism which placed the souls of

men in bondage. He wanted to deliver the souls of men from such false ideas of religion and there was no better way of calling their attention to the hollowness of such practises than by refusing to conform to them. It served also to call the attention of the Pharisee to that inward purification which he so woefully neglected and so much needed. This rite, like all other rules of the party, had become the object of "bitter controversy between the schools of Shammai and Hillel, on such a point as whether the hands were to be washed before the cup was filled with wine, or after that, and where the towel was to be deposited. With such things the most serious ritual inferences were connected on both sides. A religion which spent its energy on such trivialities must have lowered the moral tone. All the more that Jesus insisted so earnestly, as the substance of His teaching, on that corruption of our nature, which Judaism ignored, and on that spiritual purification which was needful for the reception of His doctrine, would he publicly and openly set aside ordinances of man which diverted the thought of purity into questions of the most childish character." Christ had laid down the principle before, that it is not that which entereth into a man that defileth him, but that which cometh out of a man that defileth him. The external religion militates against the internal and spiritual. And this is the very heart of Christ's religion. It is not a religion of ex-

ternals, but simply a religion of a pure heart. And this religion was incomprehensible to the Pharisee brought up to cherish external rites and to depend upon them for salvation. It was a gross insult for Christ to refuse to conform to this rite and it made Christ an unfit person for a Pharisee to have in his house. This respect for the outward and disregard for the inward purity kindled the wrath of Jesus and condemned Pharisaism to His withering scorn, for said He: "Ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them." The feeling of the Pharisee will be better understood when it is remembered that "the fraternity of the Pharisees were bound by two vows, that of tithing and that in regard to purification." "Indeed the three distinctions of a Pharisee were: not to make use nor to partake of anything that had not been tithed; to observe the laws of purification; and, as a consequence of these two, to abstain from familiar intercourse with all non-Pharisees." It was considered defiling to eat of anything that had not been first tithed. Listen to Christ's spiritual rebuke to such a system: "But rather give alms of such things as ye have; and, behold, all things are clean unto you." So as we have seen: "The conflict arose over the question of the washing of hands. Jesus did not observe this rule. He laid down a principle of much greater range and sweep. Jesus said nothing outside a man, en-

tering into him, can make him unclean; only the things which come out of a man—these are what make him unclean.” “Nothing could defile a man religiously except his own consciously committed sin.” “It was a noble and liberating utterance.” “Things cannot defile persons.” “We cannot appreciate too gratefully the grand and prophetic principle that only that which comes out of a man can make him unclean, for the spiritual personality can only be spiritually defiled. Such an utterance could not be considered by those who held to the sacredness of the Law as divinely inspired. Universally, ultimately, and religiously, the right was on the side of Jesus.” These excerpts are taken from Montifiore, a reformed Jew and not a Christian thinker. And from the same writer we have the summing up of the controversy: “If Christ’s principle was true, then the Law was wrong, for it forbade for all time the eating of certain food.” With these facts before us we can understand Luke’s words when he says: “The Scribes and Pharisees began to urge Him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things; laying wait for Him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth that they might accuse him.”

CHAPTER VII

THE CAUSES OF JEWISH UNBELIEF

IN Christ's closing message to the Jews, John quotes the passage from Isaiah, saying, "Therefore they could not believe, because he hath blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts, and be converted and I should heal them." This passage is quoted by Matthew and also by Paul when he turns from the Jews to the Gentiles. Thus it is that Matthew, John and Paul explain the "mysterious fact of Jewish unbelief." The fact that the Jews rejected their Messiah is one of the dark problems of human history and that so many of the Jews remain in unbelief is a prolonging of the mystery. It cannot be without psychological and spiritual interest that we try to explain some of the underlying causes for this unbelief and blindness.

In the above passage from Isaiah the prophet has been commissioned to "make the heart of the people fat." Godet says: "The quotation differs from both the Hebrew text and from that of the Septuagint, in that, according to the for-

mer, it is Isaiah who is said to make blind and harden by his ministry; 'make the heart of this people fat'; according to the latter, this hardening is a single fact laid to the charge of Israel." "The heart of this people is hardened: in John, on the contrary, the understood subject of the two verbs (he has hardened, he has blinded) can only be of God." They were already an unbelieving people when Christ came, and Christ knew from the beginning that his own would not receive him and his many miracles had resulted in hardening them still more. They would not believe; therefore, the time came when they could not. "Inability to understand can express itself in ways which are mean and contemptible, as is seen in religious polemic in every age." This is the only justifying sense in which this Scripture can be understood. This is the sin unto death. It is the case of the non use and abuse of our believing faculties bringing on the atrophy that cannot be remedied. They came to believe a lie.

The word "to make blind" means to deprive of intellectual light, of the sense of the true and even of the useful, of simple good sense; the word translated "hardened the heart" means "to harden the skin," the depriving of moral sensibility, the sense of the good. "From the paralysis of these two organs unbelief must necessarily result. The people may see miracle after miracle, may hear testimony after testimony, yet they will not dis-

cern in the one whom God thus pointed out, who gives all these testimonies to Himself, their Messiah." This hardening, then, is in the form of a chastisement and is a retribution for unbelief. Quoting again from Godet, he says: "An abnormal state has begun, which obliges God to use means of an extraordinary character. This divine dispensation toward Israel enters, therefore, into the category of chastisements. The creature who has abused the divine favors falls under the most terrible of punishments; from an end it becomes for the time a means. In fact, man can, by virtue of his liberty, refuse to glorify God by his obedience and salvation; but even in this case he cannot prevent God from glorifying Himself in him by a chastisement capable of making the odious character of his sin shine forth conspicuously."

But what are some of the causes leading up to this hardness of heart and loss of "moral sensibility"? First, they had substituted "traditions" for the Word of God. They had taught for God's Word the commandments of men. Theology when substituted for the simple word of God soon hardens the heart. The "letter killeth"; it is the "Spirit that giveth life." It was against this mass of tradition that Christ had to contend. It was strict adherence to the letter of the Torah that put Christ to death. It is trying to bring men into our mold of thought that has brought on the terrible persecutions of the ages. It was

blindness and hardness of heart that drove Saul to persecute the early Christians. Theology breeds intolerance, and contending for "opinions" soon shuts out mercy and robs the soul of the essence of true religion—love for God and for his fellow-man. A worship that has not in it a love for God and man is truly a vain worship. Jesus said of his enemies: "Howbeit in vain do they teach for doctrines the commandments of men. Ye hold the traditions of men, as the washing of pots and cups; and many other such things ye do. And he said unto them full well ye reject the commandment of God that ye may keep your own tradition." This substituting of man's word for the Word of God has been the guilt of the church as well as the guilt of Judaism, and it has been responsible for many crosses and many Calvaries through the persecuting years. Persecution will cease only when the church enters into the Spirit of Jesus, and realizes that truth lies deeper than statement and the spirit is always truer than the letter.

But more startling is the statement of Jesus: "I know you that ye have not the love of God in you."

A religion without love. Such was Pharisaism. Long prayers, tithing of anise, mint and cummin with due regard to law; prayer fringes and broad phylacteries; fastings, and all the strict adherence to the letter, but no love. No love for God; no love for man. Words of contempt for

weaknesses of men, a bitter scorn for those who fell under hot temptations or disobeyed their legalisms. There is so much religion in the world that lacks this essential element. Love is at the center of Christianity and it is serious when one who professes to know Christ lacks love. Without it religion is a tinkling symbol and a hollow mockery. The Pharisees were never guilty of loving any one, and lacking love their hearts soon hardened into a hostile attitude toward One who had cut their prejudices against the grain.

But there is still another cause mentioned by Christ for the blindness and hardness of their hearts. He said: "Ye neither have heard God at any time, nor seen his shape." The Jews had lost the vision of God. God had made a perfect revelation of Himself to their forefathers, but they had lost the true knowledge of God. The Jews of Christ's time did not know the God of Abraham, or the God of Moses who had proclaimed himself the gracious and long-suffering God, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy. If they had known Moses, they would have known Christ, for he wrote of Christ. Even Christ's own disciples felt the loss of this God vision, for one of them said: "Shew us the Father and it sufficeth us." "Where there is no vision the people perish." This is the great need of our age—a new fresh vision of God. "In His light we shall see light."

The Rulers did not believe on Christ and

thought His works were works of magic, and that He was a deceiver of the people. But the greatest of all charges and the most inexcusable one was that He was in league with Beelzebub the prince of devils. This charge reveals the darkness of their mind and shows the deep-seated antipathy. They certainly had reached the limit of their reasons when they gave this as the reason for rejecting His miracles, which He had wrought as an evidence of His Messiahship. All the other charges in comparison with this are minor and only go to show the meanness of the spirit which prompted them. They are personalities growing out of a bitter controversy that was at a loss for more serious charges. "The action of Jesus in casting out devils was not in itself a ground of controversy with the Pharisees, since they did the same; and, moreover, neither side questioned the genuineness of the exorcisms of the other. But it appears from Mark 3:22-30 that the Pharisees alleged that Jesus performed his cures by the help of Beelzebub the prince of devils; and Jesus denounced them as guilty of the sin against the Holy Ghost, for their malicious slander in ascribing to diabolic agency what was due to the power of God. Then follows the famous declaration: 'Whosoever shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit hath never forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin'" (Herford). As the above writer says, this passage is the ground for the Christian theology on

the unpardonable sin.

But such an accusation against Jesus only points out the moral darkness of his enemies. Well did He answer: "If I cast out devils by Beelzebub, by whom do your children cast them out?" And again He states positively, as though to refute their wicked charge: "If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you." To make their sin all the more inexcusable, they themselves expected the Messiah to cast out devils when He came and this was to be one of the signs how they were to know Him, and if the Pharisees admitted that He cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then they were forced to recognize His Messiahship, which they had determined not to do. There is certainly nothing lacking in the claims of Jesus and it is only moral perverseness that can refute His claims. Christ could well appeal to his works as a ground of their acceptance of His claims, but when they made Satan the power back of His miracles then there was no other power of appeal. This, then, constitutes their sin and unforgivable crime. This is the dead line of their moral imbecility and spiritual perverseness. Crossing this line, the soul dies eternally and irretrievably; crossing this line, the tragedy of the cross is not only possible but the only finality. To believe a lie like this is evidence that the light that was in them had turned to darkness. "There was a holy man before them, and because they

could not deny the beauty of His deeds, they found out that they were done from diabolical motives, for Beelzebub's cause. Take care, do you recollect what sin they committed by that, seeing good, and refusing to recognize it as good? It is a perilous thing to set out with the assumption that a doctrine is true and that all who do not hold that doctrine are bad. Christ reverses the order of procedure: 'Believe me for the works' sake'" (Robertson). And that is where Pharisaism led into the blind alley of an eternal sin. For believing themselves right, and there could be no other true standard than theirs, and since Jesus did not hold with them, there could be no other alternative—He is in league with Satan. Christ in league with the devil? What strange conclusions! If this were possible, then how is man ever to know the truth? I know it is said that the devil will try to deceive the very elect, and this is Christ's own warning, but the nature of Christ's miracles made this deception impossible. Did the Devil ever do such works of mercy? Miracles are ascribed to him, but they are not deeds of mercy. The corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit. The Apocryphal miracles do not come up to this standard. Many ask the question, How are we going to know the works of God from the workings of Satan? There is one infallible test: God works to a moral end. There is holiness in all His works and when God works He works with a moral end in

view. There is nothing spectacular about God's workings. They have the stamp of sincerity upon them; and the stamp of simplicity. The Apocryphal miracles are miracles of judgment and they have no moral end. This is true of the ecclesiastical miracles of the Catholic Church. Even the Old Testament miracles, in which they firmly believed, did not come up to the high standard of the miracles of Christ. They were, with the exception of a few instances, miracles of judgment and destruction. Why did they not call them works of Beelzebub? Satan open the eyes of the blind, cleanse lepers, heal multitudes of sick folk, raise the dead, feed the hungry, restore the youthful daughter to life and love? When did Satan turn saint? Last summer a man told the writer that he attended a mission where it was said Satan was at work and, after witnessing the work, he wisely said: "If the devil is doing that, he must have gotten religion." It was well said. Surely only the morally perverse could have looked upon the works of Christ and attributed the power back of them to the power of evil. Christ expected them to become the ground for their belief in His Messiahship; instead they saw only the working of Satan. The ignorant people with moral insight said: "If the Messiah come, will he do greater works than these?" But they were met with a sneer. Their own law should have warned them against such an attitude, for it says: "This will do (sug-

gesting a method of reconciliation) where it is not a case of slander; but if he has put forth a bad name against his fellow-man, he hath not forgiveness ever." It would be well if we could exonerate the Pharisees for so terrible a charge, but it is the result of their system and in perfect harmony with their whole attitude toward Christ. It is the climax of their sin and their only logical escape and the only way they can justify their action. It is hard to understand such blindness, but it is altogether too common not to believe it. It is the mystery of iniquity and one of the dark things in human life. Their case is weak and it is a common sin for men, when they are defeated, to slander their opponent and when they cannot explain his greater works to say that they are the workings of a power of evil. To an age long steeped in materialism the working of God is called hypnotism, magic. It would condemn the Pharisees and their system to admit it was God, and it would call for humility, loss of prestige and self-surrender to acknowledge God working in Christ, and this they had determined not to do. It takes a humble heart to accept a new revelation and a contrite heart to bend to a new authority. And this spirit the Pharisee did not have.

The sin against the Holy Spirit. That is the terrible sin; the sin that hath not forgiveness, and the sin in its earliest stages hardest to forgive and the hardest to repent of; the darkness

that knows no light; the moral night that has no breaking day; the despair that feels not hope; the atrophy that never heals; the state that never changes, but sinks in unending deterioration; the desolation that knows no resuscitation; the remorse that never loosens its grip on the soul; the sin that calls God a devil and cannot discern between light and darkness; the pure and the impure; Christ and Beelzebub the prince of devils.

Oh, Pharisee, what forces have made such a night in your soul? What power is that which changes the work of God into the work of Satan and the truth into a lie? and the only true man who ever came into the world into an impostor? This is still thy sin, O Jew! and thy miseries of the centuries prove how deep it has been and still is. And is the reason why men are to-day trying to defend the Pharisees because the Jews are beginning to be ashamed of their deed? Are they coming to see the darkness of their crime and are they showing symptoms of repentance? It is hard to acknowledge one's faults and hard after these centuries of rejection to acknowledge their great blunder, but the Prophet promises that God will give repentance unto Israel and "they shall look upon Him whom they have pierced."

But let none think that it is a sin peculiar to the Jewish people. It is also the danger of the Gentile church. She, too, has to deal with the

Spirit and she, too, may reject the Christ and His works of mercy. She may close her eyes to the moral beauty of Christ's holiness and substitute her dogmas and creeds for that inward holiness which Christ expects of His church. She may refuse to believe in the workings of His Spirit and be lost in the maze of her doctrines. There is much unbelief in the modern church concerning miracles and the gifts and graces of the Spirit. The church is slow to accept a pneumatological form of Christianity. The Holy Ghost is not a welcome guest in many of our churches. The writer heard a Presbyterian preacher say some time ago: "If the Holy Spirit left the world, many churches would not miss Him." This is a fearful indictment and food for serious thought. The terrible war in Europe is doubtless due to the soulless form of Christianity that has existed in Europe for a hundred years. There is a vital relation between the soulless rationalism of Germany and the cruel war she has thrust upon the world. There is no other way of accounting for her cruelties other than to say she has lost her soul and, "crucifying humanity," is crucifying Christ. Germany has repeated Calvary. German theologians are guilty of Pharisaism. And the churches can lose their souls, and I fear many have. The sin against the Spirit is not the sin of the slums, but the sin of the self-righteous. He said: "Harlots and drunkards shall go into the kingdom and ye shall be cast out." It is

the religious mind alone that is capable of committing this sin. It is easier to cure vice than to cure the soul that sees the mote in his brother's eye and is ignorant of the beam in his own. Let us not sneer at saints. Let us not persecute the good nor laugh at their ideals. Let us not slander men whose lives are pure, but whose statements of truth differ from ours. To execrate good men because they do not fit into our systems and hold our shibboleths; to drive from our company the idealists whose only crime and greatest fault is that they see deeper into spiritual truths than we ourselves; to refuse fellowship with men whose holy characters are recognized by the common people because they cannot subscribe to our creeds and dogmas, that is the road to the committal of the unpardonable sin. This is the heart and core of Pharisaism and the sin that made the cross possible and the crosses of multitudes of godly men and women possible ever since. It is the sin that made the church call Luther a fiend and Wesley the arch-heretic and Booth the impostor. I fear it is the sin of to-day. The failure of the church to recognize and reward piety; the tendency to raise to high office some whose talents are not on the side of righteousness; to subordinate the good and crowd into obscurity those who hunger and thirst after righteousness; to call men fanatics who sacrifice their all and lead the way to deeper consecration and truer piety; to shout epithets at

those who do "the greater works" and cast out demons without belonging to us, that is the danger of religion to-day. The worship of the letter and not the Spirit leads to hardness of heart. The voice of the Spirit calls to tenderness of heart and a greater love of all goodness and a recognition of the Spirit of holiness in all who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity and truth. No one need fear committing the unpardonable sin whose heart is tender toward all goodness and whose soul can discern the spirit beyond the form, and can recognize truth when she comes garbed in unaccustomed forms. There are many morbid consciences and many innocent souls who fear they have committed this sin, but to the comfort of all such let them be reminded that no soul has committed this sin that has a desire to do right and a longing to know God. The mark of this sin is hardness and indifference of heart, and where the heart is tender toward God there is no danger of falling into this sin. It is the sin of impenitence and comes as the result of often resisting the truth. May God give us all tender hearts to love the truth and escape the sin of moral insensibility and the love of darkness rather than light.

CHAPTER VIII

"THE GREAT ARRAIGNMENT"

WOE unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites." This sweeping annunciation is the "final expression of irreconcilable opposition between Jesus and the religion of the Pharisees." Divine patience is exhausted. The last hope of changing their minds is gone. He has waited to the last moment and then, like the angels of the Apocalypse, He pours out His vials of wrath. This is done for the sake of His disciples. He recognizes their authority by telling the disciples "to observe and do what they command, but do ye not after their works, for they say and do not." According to the Greek word, they had seated themselves in Moses' seat. They were self-appointed, an ecclesiastic religious authority is always attended by many dangers, and there is a temptation to have dominion over the faith of others rather than to be helpers "of their joy." Jesus tears the cloak from these blind guides and, while he admits the authority they represent, he proves their moral unfitness to be leaders of the people. They bind heavy burdens too grievous to be borne and lay them on

men's shoulders; but they themselves do not move them with one of their fingers; they do their work to be seen of men; they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments and love the uppermost rooms at feasts and chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets and they love to be called “Rabbi, Rabbi.” In the woes that follow Jesus points out the evil effects of the whole Pharisaic system. It shuts up the kingdom against men. A rigid, external religion keeps many people from entering the kingdom. A religion made up of Do's and Don't's must keep many from entering the kingdom which must be entered by faith. They devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers; therefore, they shall receive the greater damnation. This kind of religious pretense has done much to hinder the cause of true religion.

There are many men in the church who will make large contributions to the church who would not think of lifting a petty mortgage from a poor widow's home. There is much misguided and non-Christian philanthropy in this land. The Pharisees were liberal, but their liberality was false. A long prayer will never atone for a cruel deed and the church needs Christianizing at the point of its giving. Cyprian, the great churchman of the fourth century, sold the plate of the church to liberate the slaves. Such Christianity counts for something. There are too many men

who are making long prayers and getting rich on the sins and heartaches of the people. And such a religion soon becomes a proselyting religion, for when the true spirit of religion is lacking the system becomes one of making converts. Having lost the power to persuade, and draw the people by the "love that constraineth," men compass sea and land to make one proselyte. There is a danger of being more anxious about making members for our respective denominations than we are to feed the hungry and clothe the naked. When Paul was leaving Jerusalem the brethren warned him not to forget the poor. Pharisaism is not far removed from the neglect of the poor. If we would keep our religion sincere and pure, we must keep in touch with the poor or else we shall soon be "straining at the gnat and swallowing a camel"; tithing with scrupulosity our mint and anise and cummin and passing over "judgment, mercy and faith." Pharisaism falls into the habit of making fine distinctions; distinctions where the difference is hard to find, or where the inconsistencies are only too apparent to those who have eyes to see. They made a difference between the gift and the altar and between the temple and the altar. It is impossible for a religion made up of rules and precepts to be consistent. "He who knows moral wrong to be the only evil will be free from scrupulosities which torment others," and from those glaring inconsistencies which jus-

tify at times the charge of Pharisaical hypocrisy.

The "withering curse" falls heavier as Christ proceeds with his denunciation. Indignation burns fiercer as these flagrant sins appear to the mind of Christ. It is like the hurricane that finds every sapless branch. From particular He passes to general and from effect to cause. They make clean the outside of the platter, forgetting that God desires truth in the inward parts, and that it is in the secret parts that God wants man to know wisdom. These are not weaknesses on the surface of their lives, but corruptions coming from their innermost hearts. Terrific words follow—words that would be out of place if they fell from any other lips but divine lips. Such words find their source in that omniscience which knows what is in man, and in that authority which is greater than man. No preacher would ever be justified in pronouncing such woes upon his fellow-men. Christ calls them "whited sepulchres," full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness; appearing outwardly righteous unto men, they are within full of hypocrisy and iniquity; they are serpents, and a generation of vipers, and cannot "escape the damnation of hell." "His withering curse fell only upon one class of men, the hypocrites, souls honeycombed with falsehood, in whom moral integrity had been deliberately crushed out."

How great must have been the sin of the Pharisees to have deserved from One so gentle

and compassionate such denunciatory words, such fiery invectives and such unsparing judgment. What a soul-destroying system it must have been to call forth such a warning. There was reason to warn His disciples to "beware of the leaven of the Pharisees." "In or out of the church, that is Pharisaism, the mind of the flesh, giving no true liberty, and cursing the soul with drought and increasing impotence."

There are those who think these words did not fall from the lips of Jesus; that they were unlike His gentle Spirit. They fail to understand the Spirit of Christ. They are not the words of a petulant soul, nor are they the words of an angered opponent. There is pathos in them. They are the words of a grieved heart; a heart that has yearned over these men, and would often have gathered them, as a hen doth her chickens under her wing. It is disappointed love that has been speaking. It is the wrath of the Lamb that has found vent in such storm words. It is love vindicating itself and truth rebuking falsehood, and righteousness judging unrighteousness. It is the final battle of a long-drawn-out conflict; the final clash of two opposing sets of principles which are and forever must be in antagonism.

I cannot close this chapter better than by giving the words of Herford. He says: "The conflict was one between two fundamentally different conceptions of religion, viz., that in which

the supreme authority was Torah, and that in which the supreme authority was the immediate intuition of God in the individual soul and conscience. The Pharisees stood for one; Jesus stood for the other. The conflict was unequal because it was one in which an Idea was matched against a Person. The idea of Torah was sublime, and deserved all the devoted loyalty that was given to its expression and defense. But it was an idea mediated in the consciousness of those who held it. Jesus was a living soul, with the spiritual force of a tremendous personality; and against Him the idea of Torah could not prevail. This was the real meaning of the fact that He taught "as one having authority and not as the Scribes," but "they could not at the same time contain the conception of the Torah as a basis of their religion and admit the authority of Jesus. They saw no reason why they should abandon the Torah; they could not, therefore, do other than reject Jesus. And when the verdict of the Pharisees is expressed in the saying of the Talmud, already quoted, 'Jesus practised magic and led astray Israel,' that contemptuous dismissal shows how completely they failed to realize that what had opposed them had been the strength of a great personality." And let me add that that personality was God. And God is love and God is life, and life and love cannot be bound up in such a system of doing and not doing; in such a legalism that contracted the

souls of men and filled their souls with hatred and petty bigotries. The new wine of God's personality in Christ was not only bound to come into lasting conflict, but was bound to burst the "old bottles." And since the cross of Jesus has been an historical fact, Judaism has been spilled upon the ground and the "fig tree is withered from the roots." The "passionate lament of love" followed this terrible indictment and Christ, leaving His enemies baffled and enraged, went forward to the cross to seal his message with the lasting influence of His great sacrifice, and thus it is that the cross uncovers the sin of hypocrisy.

CHAPTER IX

"THE PHARISEE IN PARABLE"

THE Pharisee stands out prominently in the parables of Jesus. Among the thirty parables of Jesus, those containing a picture of the Pharisee and setting forth the characteristics of his religion are the most important and the best known. The world will never forget the picture of the elder brother refusing to welcome home the lost prodigal, nor the good Samaritan, nor the two men that went up to the temple to pray. Then there is the parable of the evil husbandmen in the vineyard, and the parables of the kingdom, setting forth the hostility of the rulers of the Jews towards Jesus, their Messiah, the Heir and Son of God. Many of these parables are given in Passion Week when the conflict was at its height and was drawing to its tragic close. The three first-mentioned parables set forth most clearly the character of the Pharisees and their religion.

We take first the so-called parable of the Prodigal. A better title would be the parable of the Elder Brother. The prominent character is the sulking brother which so vividly portrays

the character and depicts the spirit and attitude of the Pharisees towards the Publicans and sinners. The scope of the parable is seen in the first verses of Luke 15: "Then drew near unto him all Publicans and sinners for to hear him. And the Pharisees and Scribes murmured, saying, this man receiveth sinners and eateth with them." Christ answers in the three following parables: "The Lost Sheep," "The Lost Coin," and "The Lost Brother." There is rejoicing over the lost sheep and over the lost coin, but the Elder Brother refuses to rejoice over the return of the Lost Man. The Pharisee despised the publican and sinner, and his religion had no place for the penitents of a lost society. Their first principle is to have nothing to do with the common people, and to them it was unthinkable that Jesus could be pious and eat with the publicans and sinners. The Pharisees were shocked when on one occasion a woman of the streets came in and worshipped at Christ's feet and said, had He been a prophet, He would have known what manner of woman she was, but to Jesus the woman was nearer the kingdom in her love and penitence than Simon was, whose religion lacked love, tenderness, and courtesy. Listen to Christ's gentle rebuke: "Simon, you gave me no water to wash my feet, you gave me no kiss and no oil to anoint my head. Contrast this woman who out of her tender heart hath not ceased to wash my feet with her tears and wipe

them with the hairs of her head." The proud punctilious Pharisee is judged in the presence of a contrite heart and a soul thirsting with gratitude, the result of a true repentance and a desire to be true.

But let us return to the Elder Brother and look at his case. We must give him credit for his loyalty to virtue and the commandments. We must not overlook what is good in Pharisaism. It will not do to speak lightly of "mere morality." The Elder Brother has much to plead in his own behalf. It did not seem just to make all this fuss over a prodigal—over one who had brought disgrace and dishonor to religion, but the Pharisee could not understand mercy. There was no mercy in his system of religion. It was cold, puritanical and religiously exact, but it lacked the great essentials of pure religion, love and mercy. It is true, the church is apt to become sentimental about the vile sinners and make much of those who have fallen low in sin, and pass by those who have "kept themselves unspotted from the world." In the parable Christ shows respect for the faithfulness of the stay-at-home son, but rebukes gently the spirit that cannot rejoice and be glad over the return of the penitent. F. W. Robertson says: "It was natural that the Elder Brother should feel perplexed and hurt. When a sinner seems to be rewarded with more happiness than a saint, it appears as if good and evil were alike undistinguished in God's deal-

ings. It seems like putting a reconciled enemy over the head of a tried servant. It looks as if it were a kind of encouragement held out to sin, and a man begins to feel: 'Well, if this rich feast of gladness be the reward of a licentious life, "verily I have cleansed my heart in vain and washed my hands in innocency." ' It was indeed hard for one trained in a religion of self-righteousness to understand so sudden a joy coming to one who had gone so deep in sin. It is not in the nature of Pharisaism to understand a salvation by faith. The Elder Brother represents a sincere Pharisee, one whose heart had not been hardened into cruel rebellion, but one like Nicodemus, who said, "How can these things be?" If you analyze the spirit, you would find jealousy over His treatment. A sulkiness that refuses to be happy over another's good fortune, a selfishness that binds the heart and prevents it from entering into the joy of another, and a self-righteousness that expects reward for self-doing.

But let us turn to another parable in which Christ attacked the false religious system of the Pharisaical party—the parable of the Good Samaritan. This must have been a stinging rebuke to those who heard it. In this parable it is the sin of exclusiveness that Jesus condemns. The self-righteous Jew had no dealing with the Samaritan. The disciples marveled that Christ talked with the Samaritan woman, and the

woman herself marveled; how such teaching must have stung to the quick those men who felt themselves too holy to speak to a Samaritan or even to pass through his country, to hear Jesus holding one up as an example of pure godliness and contrasting his deed with the cold-heartedness that passed in proud procession on the other side. In the parable we have Jesus charging the whole Rabbinic system with cold-hearted hypocrisy. A "more complete rebuke of Judaistic narrowness, as well as a more full, generous, and spiritual world teaching than that of Christ's parable, could not be imagined." The resplendent soul of Jesus comes out in this parable and the essence of His gospel is found in the simple wayside story. It is one of the Rabbinic lawyers who puts the question, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life? It was the old Judaism of self-righteousness speaking in disguise; that which was the ultimate grounds of rejecting and crucifying Christ." And again the same writer just quoted says: "Whatever modern Judaism may say to the contrary, there is a foundation of truth in the ancient charge against the Jews of odium generis humani (hatred of mankind)." And in the parable Christ is contrasting their hatred of nations with the simple love of humanity found in the heart of the good Samaritan. The Pharisees could not understand Him who said: "Other sheep have I that are not of this fold, them also must I bring." There is danger

in our separation that we lose the love for mankind. Christ's religion demands separation, but it is in order to go unto the lost and fallen and bind up the wounds. The Samaritan, not knowing the law, and not included in one of the "elect," is, nevertheless, the one held up by Christ as having the true spirit of religion. Christ is not teaching here that good works merit salvation, but He is teaching the opposite. They have greatly misunderstood the parable who think that Christ was teaching such doctrine. He is answering the lawyer's question, "What good thing must I do?" and the other question, "Who then is my neighbor?" by saying that we must have the love of God in the heart to love mankind and the spirit of exclusiveness is false and that a narrowness even under the name of holiness is unchristian. Christ says, "Which of these three seems to thee to have become neighbor of him that fell among the robbers?" and the lawyer, still reluctant to take the hateful name of Samaritan upon his lips, is forced to answer, "He that showed mercy upon him," and the answer comes, "Go thou and do likewise." But could he? Not unless a great change came to his heart. There are many religious people who cannot go and do likewise; their conception of religion is too narrow; they seemingly have room only for their own sect and party and they need their heart enlarged, and their vision broadened. There are doctrines that cramp the soul and

religious views that shrivel the heart and blunt the affections. David said: "When my heart is enlarged I will run in the way of thy commandments." Many people, like the Pharisees in their desire to be true, become false; in their anxiety to please God treat Him as an austere master and forget that God is love. Christ's religion is a missionary religion because it teaches the soul to love all mankind and it is the religion that is destined to encompass mankind because the "gospel would not only abolish man's enmity but bridge over man's separation." The Cross has broken down the middle wall of partition that was between them. It is not Christ's teaching that separates into sectaries, but a modern Pharisaism that will be ashamed at His coming. Christ will enlarge our hearts if we will drink deeper of His spirit. The danger to the soul is that this narrowness of heart is harbored under the cloak of piety and under a mistaken idea of separation. Christendom is not Christian, hence tumults, hatred of mankind, wars, divisions among the people of God, and a religion that spends itself is judging one another rather than loving one another.

But let us pass to a third parable for a brief consideration. Here Christ contrasts the self-righteousness of the Pharisees with the penitent humility of the Publican. There is the spirit of self-trust and of contempt for others. It is the man who loves to stand praying in the syna-

gogue. Two men went up to the temple to pray and they represent two opposite attitudes toward God and two opposite systems in religion. The Pharisee is self-confident in his righteousness: "I thank thee that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers," and thus far that is well. We have reason to thank God for the restraining grace that has kept us from the vices and sins of more unfortunate men. We have ample cause to thank God that we were not born in the slums and of degraded parents. We should be thankful that we have not fallen into vicious habits and wrecked our early manhood. We should be thankful for prevenient grace that kept us from becoming outcasts in society until we became the subjects of saving grace. But wherein have we the right to boast or point the finger of contempt at our weaker brother who has fallen, and whose opportunities have been less? It should be with pity that we look upon the weak and the erring, for, given the same parentage and the same environment, we doubtless would have entered the same course. Pointing to a drunkard, John Newton said: "There goes John Newton, but for the grace of God." But the Pharisee did not stop there; he pointed with contempt at the publican and said: "Nor also as this publican." There is nothing more un-Christlike than contempt. It is never fitting that it should fall from the lips of a Christian; to call a brother a "fool" brings the soul near

hell-fire, and whosoever shall say to his brother, "Raca, shall be in danger of the council." There is a mean spirit back of contempt and an unwarranted self-approval and sense of superiority unbecoming to a religious man. The religion of Christ never perches itself upon the pinnacle of self-esteem and looks down contemptuously upon a fellow-man, no matter how low he may have fallen. But he goes on to excuse himself by telling of his virtues. He fasts twice a week and gives half his goods to feed the poor. He stands apart from the worshipers in cold isolation, boasting of his deeds of righteousness and measuring himself by himself.

It was the custom of the Pharisees to separate themselves from other worshipers in the temple, and especially from the publicans, whom they hated with intense hatred. They despised the Am. haarets, the common people, for they not only separated from the Gentiles, but from those who were considered unlearned, for these were "accursed, not knowing the law," and it was their opinion that "The unlearned cannot be pious." This man was a strict Pharisee, like Paul, a Pharisee of the Pharisees, and he shows to what depth the teaching of Rabbinism sinks the spirit of man. Lest it should be thought that the picture is overdrawn, I quote from Rabbinism the boastful saying of Rabbi Simeon Ben Joehar, who said: "That if there were only two righteous men in the world, he and his son were these;

and if only one it was he." Much more might be quoted to prove that the picture Christ draws is a moderate one.

What a contrast is the spirit of the Publican! He, too, stands apart, but it is in humility and self-abasement. He feels unworthy to look into the face of God or man. "Compare the conscience of the heathen—it stung, it haunted them in their dreams,—or the publican that went up to the temple, with that of the Pharisee—pacified, domesticated, brought into harness—a tame conscience converted into manageable and applauding companion, vulgarized, humiliated, and ashamed; with a potent sway over mint, anise and cummin, but no power over the heart. It is humble confession that sends the soul of any man home, justified, and without it, the heart is left hardened, un pitying, and self-deceived." Truly Christ taught, except "Your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of Heaven." There are those who never have a feeling of need, who are among the Ninety and Nine who need no repentance, but the true door into life is through repentance and true humility. The Pharisee went home with a self-satisfied feeling that he was the chosen of God, but the Publican returned with the tenderness of God in his heart, which is God's best witness that we have entered into real life—God's life, "For He only," as Ruskin says, "is advanc-

ing in life whose heart is getting softer, whose blood warmer, whose brain quicker, whose spirit is entering into living peace" and "being justified by faith, and not by our own good works, we have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord." We see, therefore, by the teaching of parables that there is a great gulf fixed between Jesus and the Pharisaical system, and the conflict was inevitable as it was fundamental. The Pharisee obeys the strict letter of the law, the Christian walks in the spirit; the Pharisee is governed by an idea, the Christian is ruled by a spirit within. The first makes himself the center; the second makes Christ the center.

CHAPTER X

THE CONFLICT ENDED

THE enemies of Jesus, driven into confusion at last, fell into a mesh of lies and unfounded accusations, and not being able to try Him before their own tribunal because they wanted a sentence of capital punishment against him, and not being able to pronounce it against him themselves, they formulated a capital charge and brought him to Pilate."

The greatest charge against Judaism is the trial and death of Jesus. Nothing but national repentance will ever wipe out that sin. "There is no second Christ to atone for the rejection of the first." The cross ended the conflict, but in whose favor? Let the centuries answer. Millions of crosses throughout Christendom proclaim the doom of Judaism in general and Pharisaism in particular. There was something diabolically wicked in the men who put Jesus to death. There was an inexcusable blindness and hardness of heart that plotted the trial and cried out for His death. Surely He was right when He said they were full of ravening wolves. This is the verdict of the ages and the Jewish nation can-

not wipe its hands in innocency as easily as Pilate did. The Jews would like to change that verdict, but they cannot, and not until they admit their crime and acknowledge their guilt can they escape the dark shadows the cross of Golgotha has thrown across their national existence. "The cross of the God-Man hath put an end to the punishment of the cross and instead made the cross the symbol of humanity, civilization, progress, peace and love." The cross of Jesus has been the death of Judaism and the continual shame of the nation. Everywhere they have been driven they have been reminded of their crime and as a nation they could say with David, their king, "My sin is ever before me." It has not been necessary for the rude Christians to call them "Christ killers," for the Jews have met the reminder of their crime every day since the day when the sun darkened at noonday and they cried out in their madness, "Let the blood of this man be upon us and our children." It was surely a "Pentecost of calamity" for them and their children. They have been surrounded by the church the cross brought into existence, and the cross which the church made the symbol of her faith has met them at every crossroad of their weary wanderings. The sad Jew has met the jubilant Christian under every clime. The church has supplanted the Temple and Synagogue and Judaism may continue to build her Synagogues, but Judaism is a dead faith and a "figtree cursed by

the roadside" from which the nations of the earth look in vain for spiritual food.

" 'We have no king but Cæsar' and with this cry Judaism was, in the person of its representatives, guilty of the denial of God, of blasphemy and apostasy." It committed suicide; and ever since has its dead body been carried in show from land to land, and from century to century; to be dead, and to remain dead, till He come a second time who is the resurrection and the life.

This is the cause of all their misery and woe. Surely the cross testifies to a new form of evil in the world and lays open the depths of human depravity. The cross tore the cloak from Pharisaism and revealed its inward rottenness and hollow hypocrisy. It revealed sin in the human heart and those who stood forth as the most righteous nation are found guilty of the most infamous crime. This is the dark tragedy of Judaism that no sophistry can ever wipe out and only the great mercy of God can ever forgive. The Jews must go to the victim of their sin to find atonement for their sin. The repentance of the Jews when they look upon Him whom they have pierced will be the miracle of the ages—"a nation born in a day."

The cross ended the conflict by establishing a new kind of righteousness and forever branding a self-righteousness that mocked God in the death of His Son. Pharisaism was too blind

to see that in putting Christ to death it was destroying itself. Pharisaism was Satan's masterpiece, for what better served his purpose than a religion of hollow pretense such as Pharisaism proved itself to be. Surely when Satan bruised Christ's heel Christ crushed his head. The cross ended the conflict and it is at the cross that man finds his freedom from sin and the law, and thus Satan defeated himself, and sin becomes its own destroyer and its own judge.

"Jesus could not have escaped the cross and he knew it. There was no other goal in the world for the driving force which worked in Him." "Jerusalem's traditional sin had been the sin against the light; not merely was the sin in the face of light, it was active opposition to the light," and "it is impossible to read the story of the closing episodes of our Lord's life without hearing the tramp of a thousand forces." But the conflict of Jesus with official hypocrisy is at an end. Their hate could go no further. Beyond the cross their madness rages in vain. The body of Christ hangs limp and lifeless upon the cross, but His spirit fills the world and the death of Christ has brought into the world a new order of being; a new and universal religion of love and sacrifice. The hate that death alone could satisfy has been shattered and its rage made impotent. The death and resurrection of Christ has made men not only fearless in the face of Christ's foes, but has made them the conquerors

of Judaism. Christianity dethroned Pharisaism as life dethrones death. Calvary dissolved the Sanhedrim and scattered the nation. The New Testament has annulled the Talmud, and the Jews are still beating their souls in vain against the inevitable. The story of Calvary disturbs his most fantastic dreams of a future. It is at the cross alone that the Jew can find rest for his weary spirit. For it is the cross that proclaims the royalty of mind and bestows freedom upon the soul of mankind. Montifiore has beautifully said: "It was the distinction and the original greatness of the Teacher of Nazareth that he did want to hold out a hand, and that he did actually hold it out, the hand of sympathy, of encouragement, of redemption."

Paul, a Pharisee of the Pharisees, is the great hero of the cross and the best expounder of its freedom. He has led the ages into the liberty wherewith Christ hath made men free. The Jews charge Paul with perverting Christianity and Paulinism has always been a contention among Jew and Gentile. It has been charged against Paul that he is responsible for the Balkan Wars and for the war now ravaging Europe. Be it so, we welcome it, for it is better to be in the death struggle for freedom than in the bondage of death. Paul carried the cross of freedom into Europe and some day the "rule of the kings will give way to the rule of the King." Heine said: "I dreamt of reconciling Jew and Greek—the

goodness of beauty with the beauty of goodness." Heine failed because he denied the cross, the reconciling principle. Paul said: "Unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." It is at the cross that the Jew and Greek become one and the conflict between men will cease and warfare will end. For Paul says: "He is our peace who hath made both one and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby; and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh."

It is Pharisaism that has divided the church of God in all ages. The church has ignored the cross and its teachings and so doing has brought on divisions and strifes. Peace will never come to the world until men find it at the cross of Christ. We must say to the church, as Paul said to the Corinthians, "Be ye also enlarged," for "my heart is enlarged." Lord Chamberlain was asked to give his influence to the Hague Peace Convention, and he answered, "There will be no peace until after the Armageddon." And after the Armageddon the Jew will accept Christ and then Heine's dream and the

Utopian dreams of the ages from Isaiah to the last yearning heart will be realized in the Christ of Calvary. It has been said that the "mission of the Jew will not be ended until Christians are converted to the religion of Christ," and with equal force it might be said that the work of the church will not be complete until the Jews are converted to Christ. A Jew has written: "If there is no world's Saviour coming by the railway, let us keep the figure of the Divine Dreamer whose blood is balsam to the poor and suffering." "Will it never end," says Heine, "this strife of Jew and Greek?" Yes, we answer, when the Jews open their eyes and receive the Dreamer that the blind Pharisaism of their forefathers put to death as an impostor. There is pathos in the words of this German philosopher when he writes: "Would to God I could blot out all my books on German philosophy. No! no! humanity is too weak and too miserable. We must have faith, we cannot live without faith in the old simple things, the present God, the dear old Bible, a life beyond the grave." Poor man, he was almost in the kingdom. Another step of faith and the heaven would have opened for him as it opened for Paul and he would have seen the Risen Lord. It is the cross that has made religion simple and sublime. It is Christ that has taken the law yoke from our hearts and set us free. It is Christ who is calling across the ages to man's burdened heart and

troubled spirit, "Come unto me and I will give you rest." It is at the cross we see the love of a personal God and the Father becomes real to our faith. And it is the death of Christ that has made the Bible a living book.

Man's soul cries out for liberty, and this liberty cannot be found in the legalism of Judaism. "Christian liberty is internal. It resides in the depths of the soul; a soul freed by faith is safe from superstition. He who fears God will fear nothing else. He who knows moral wrong to be the only evil will be free from scrupulosities which torment others. It is that free self-determination which rules all things, which can enjoy or abstain at will. This spirit is expressed in: 'All things are yours, whether life or death, things present or things to come—all are yours.'" The death of Christ has delivered us from the body of death which is the legal mind. He has not given us the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the spirit of a sound mind whereby we cry, "Abba, Father." Remember Paul's words: "All things are lawful to me, but all things are not expedient." "Worldliness, then, does not consist in giving up this or that, but in a certain inward principle. The Pharisee tried to please God by his good works, but Christ taught that the first commandment was to love God with all our heart, and our neighbor as ourselves." God is pleased with a childlike simplicity. "Except ye be converted and become as a little child, ye cannot

enter the kingdom." Modern Pharisaism—for there is a Christian Pharisaism as well as a Jewish—sets up its standards of life, saying this is worldly and that is holy until Christianity becomes largely a matter of opinion among us rather than a loving, simple trust in the Redeemer, who "led captivity a captive and gave gifts unto men." What a victory Christ won for men when He unshackled man's thought and freed his spirit from a religion of fear and made the serving of God the loving of God, and the work of God the believing on Him who sent Christ into the world.

"In Europe as a whole, in the twentieth century, two great spirit forces contend for men's allegiance—Napoleon and Christ. The One, the representative of life-renunciation, places the reconciliation of life's discords and the solution of its problems in the tranquil but nebulous region beyond the grave; the other, the asserter of earth's glories, disregardful of any life beyond the grave, finds supreme end in heroism and the doing of great things, and seeks no immortality except the immortality of renown, and even of that he is slightly contemptuous. The law, on the other hand, which Christ laid upon men appears to be the law of self-effacement. The true Christian toils for others; he prays, but for others. He suffers for them; he dies for them; *servus servorum Dei*—slave of the slaves of God—was the proud subscription which the

haughtiest of the Medieval Pontiffs placed at the end of their letters."

And so we ask, Has the cross failed?

"Whose is the victory? Answer ye;
Who, dying, smiled at tyranny."

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Shaw, George, 1870-

**The conflict of Jesus, by George Shaw ... Boston
Badger; [etc., etc., '1916]**

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